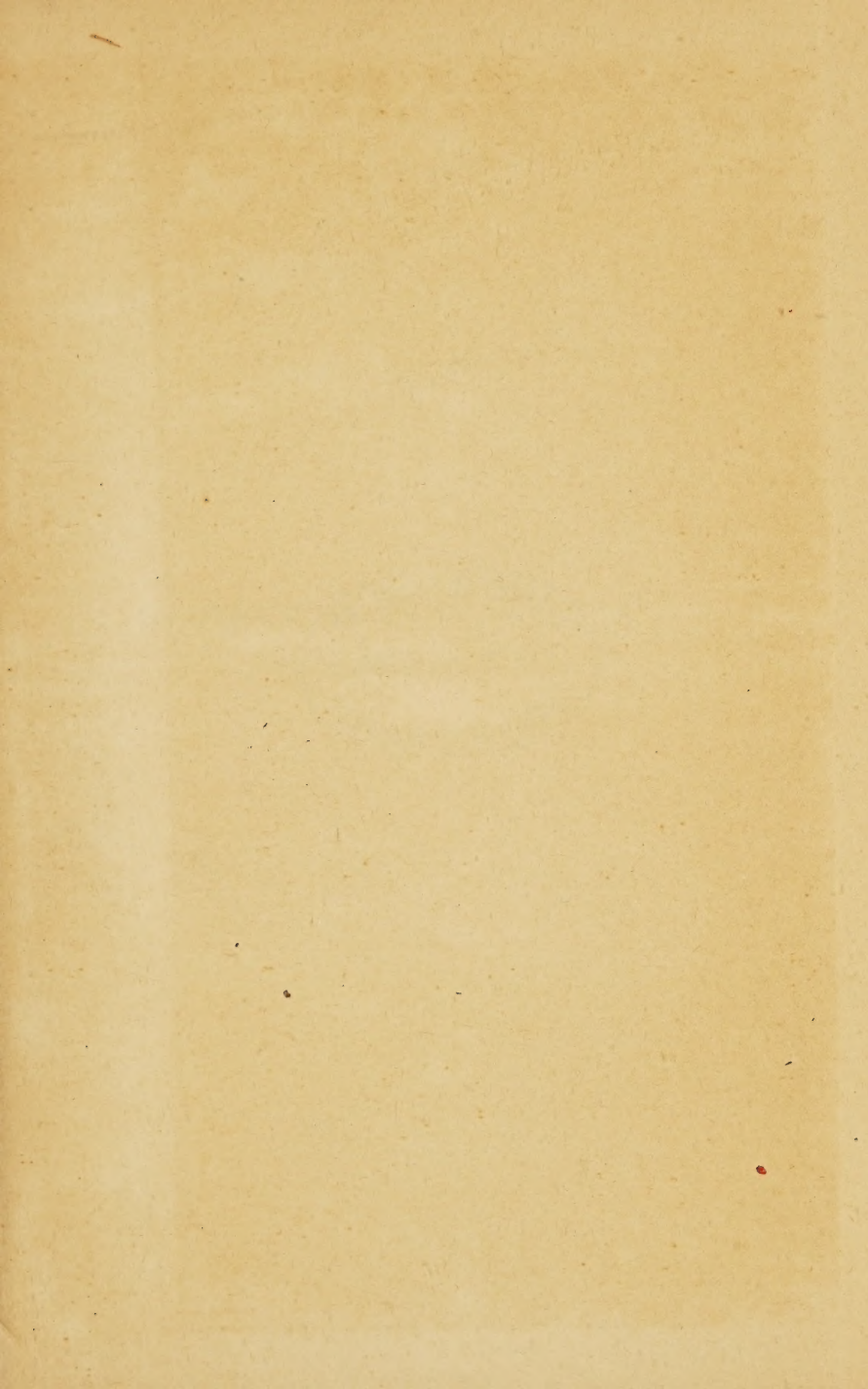
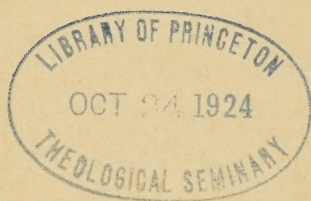


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Studies on God and His
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STUDIES ON GOD AND HIS
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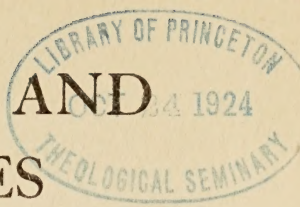
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WESTMONASTERII, die 21a Januarii, 1924.



STUDIES ON GOD AND HIS CREATURES

BY
✓
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"OF GOD AND HIS CREATURES," ETC.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C. 4
NEW YORK, TORONTO
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND MADRAS

1924

Made in Great Britain

PREFACE.

THESE Studies bear on my Translation of St. Thomas's *Contra Gentiles*, published by Messrs. Burns & Oates, in the year 1905, under the title of *God and His Creatures*, now all happily sold. I quote the *Contra Gentiles* (C.G.) by book and chapter as in the Latin. The references are not absolutely necessary. The Studies will stand without them. Of the two interlocutors employed, Sosias on the whole represents myself, while Eumenes is the kind reader who will read good into me wherever that is possible. What Plato (*Laws*, 718D) calls a *raw mind* will stomach nothing: there is no kindly juice within, to digest any mental food supplied. The 'gentle reader' is the kind reader; and the kind reader is the better learner.

This work was written before the publication of Father Joyce's *Natural Theology*, and does not in any way refer to it. It is hoped that two different presentations of the argument for the existence of God may serve to throw light on one another.

A companion volume to these Studies will be found in Dialogues published under the title of *In an Indian Abbey* (Burns, Oates & Washbourne) by the same author.

J. R.

CAMPION HALL, OXFORD,
1924.

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STUDY I.

FAITH.

§ I. FAITH A CAPTIVITY OF THE INTELLECT.

THE *Summa contra Gentiles* of St. Thomas Aquinas, which I have translated under the title *Of God and His Creatures*, is also known as the *Summa Philosophica*, because in arguing with Gentiles and other than Christian people it is necessary to fetch arguments from reason and philosophy, the opponent recognising no other sources. It is then a philosophical work, but from the outset the author avows that his philosophy is checked by faith, and that he is no votary of free thought. See Book I, cc. 4-7 : III, cc. 118, 153 : IV, i. And the whole of Book IV is an exposition of the revealed religion and truths of faith. Consequently *Of God and His Creatures* stands in contrast with the favourite philosophical compositions of our day. In no respect is the contrast stronger than in this, that the modern philosopher thinks as he pleases, his conscience never interferes with his thought, thought with him is no matter of morality or obligation or law, in thinking he stands in no awe of any authority against whose prescription it would be

wrong for him to form a judgment ; while St. Thomas thought, and made it a duty to think, within the bounds allowed by the definitions of Catholic faith, and to those limiting and defining lines he often appeals in confirmation of his speculations. Either St. Thomas's self-suppression was uncalled for, and crippled his philosophy, or the licence of modern speculation is flagrantly wrong. One side or the other must have missed the truth, because it has been using a wrong method.

There is this to be said for St. Thomas's method, that it is the method of St. Paul, of the Four Gospels, of Christianity from the first. Free thinking has never been allowed in the Christian Church. The Gospel is a rule of thinking as well as a rule of conduct. From Apostolic times, besides the Commandments there has been a Creed.¹ St. Paul thus describes his own procedure against free thought : *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but powerful through God to the destruction of strongholds, putting down arguments and every high conceit that lifteth itself up against the knowledge [obedience] of God, and bringing into captivity every thought [αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα] to the obedience of Christ* (2 Cor. x. 4, 5). There are then, according to St. Paul, two lines of thought, free thought and captive thought. On the line of free thought, travel as far as you will, unless you at last arrive at a point at which you agree,

¹ See a Creed, gathered from the New Testament, in Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii. 262-5.

as St. John Chrysostom says (in 1 Cor. i. 22), to "quell arguments and give yourself over to your Master," you will never find God and His Christ. To be a Christian, a man must admit some authority in religious speculation, an authority which it shall be a sin to question, challenge, doubt, disbelieve, or disobey. In this most important particular, religion differs from the subject-matter of any physical science, as chemistry. No chemical theory can ever be tendered to anyone on chemical grounds, as something which it is wicked and immoral to reject: nor is there such a thing as a chemical revelation, to be believed on authority under pain of damnation (cf. Mark xvi. 16: Gal. i. 8, 9). And therefore the methods of physical science are not the methods of religious truth. Such at least has been the persistent teaching of the Catholic Church from the days of St. Paul.

Having quoted St. John Chrysostom once, I will add three more quotations from him, premising that for explanation the reader should consult Cardinal Newman's *Loss and Gain*, Part II, chap. vi.: "Now it cannot be denied, etc." I quote them here only to show how peremptorily the captivity of intellect in matters of faith was insisted upon in the fourth century, and that by one of the most faithful expositors of St. Paul. On 1 Cor. ii. 29 he writes: "It was then lawful to handle arguments and use the wisdom of the Gentiles, when we were being led by the hand through the evidence of creation; but now, unless you

become a fool, that is, unless you empty out all argument and all wisdom, and give yourself over to faith, it is impossible to be saved." Again, on Rom. iv. 20 : "Such is faith, clearer than proof from reason and more persuasive, for there is no room left in future for another reason to come in atop of the first and shake the proof. He that is persuaded by reasons may be unpersuaded again by the like ; but he that rests in the assurance of faith has fortified his reason for all time to come against the ravages of argument." And lastly, on 1 Tim. i. 4 : "It is God's wish to bestow great things upon us, but reason cannot take in the greatness of His dispensations. That must be done by faith, the grand medicine of souls. Enquiry therefore is contrary to the dispensation of God. For what is the dispensation according to faith? To receive God's benefits and profit by them, to doubt of nothing, to question nothing, but simply to acquiesce. The edifice that faith has completed, enquiry overthrows, raising questions and casting out faith. . . . The best proof of our knowing God is our believing in whatever He says, independently of proofs and demonstrations." On this last passage I may observe that what the Saint deprecates is not the enquiry of elucidation, of which the *Contra Gentiles* and much of St. John Chrysostom's own writing affords splendid examples, but the enquiry of doubt. Also, as Newman points out in the passage referred to, though the believer is cut off from the enquiry of doubt, yet not so the man who has not yet found faith. What can

he who has not yet found do but seek? Still he sins who goes on seeking, when he has the truth at his feet and ought to embrace it.

The attitude then of the Christian man—all the more if he be a man of high education—is what Newman has described as “smiting hard and throwing back the immense energy of the aggressive, capricious, and untrustworthy intellect” (*History of my Religious Opinions*, chap. vii.). This is a hard thing to do: nay, as I shall show later, it is a thing impossible to do without special help from on high. And it is a hard thing to see the reasonableness of behaving in such a way towards reason. This difficulty more than any other keeps educated men from the faith: they will not suffer their intellect to be led into captivity, they will brook no authority dictating to their thought. Yet captivity of thought is the quintessence of Christianity. In the Church’s estimate free thought is as disastrous as free love, or any other form of free passion. Nay, it is even more fundamentally unchristian. The man who gives the rein to his passions may be a Christian, although a bad one; but the freethinker, if he were once a Christian, has *made shipwreck of the faith* (1 Tim. i. 19); and if the faith were never his, he has that about him which, so long as he keeps it, will for ever exclude him from the fold of Christ. *Whoever receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child, shall never enter into it* (Luke xviii. 17).

Says St. Thomas: “God is not offended by us except by what we do against our own good” (C.

Gent. III, 122). He is not offended then by free-thinking except in so far as free-thinking is bad for man. That free-thinking is bad for Christian man is evident, for it subverts the very basis of Christianity, which is discipleship, being *taught of God* (John vi. 45). Is it bad for man simply as man? To answer, we must examine what manner of commodity we have got under the label *free-thought*. The term apparently does not always mean one and the same thing. As *free-speech* may mean "saying whatever comes into your head," and *free-living* "gratifying your appetite as far as it will go," so *free-thinking* may mean "thinking, or judging, whatever you like to think and judge." Thus taken, the three terms mean severally "rash thinking," "rash speech," and "licentious living." It is evident that none of these things is good for man without reserve, or good in any way except accidentally for a time, as "rash riding" might be good in a beginner. It may turn out well to have ridden rashly sometimes. The man who has never ridden rashly will probably never make a bold and skilful rider at all. But in proportion as he becomes skilful, he loathes rashness and recklessness: it is the riding of a novice in the saddle, a hopeful novice perhaps, but not a trained horseman. Rash riding after all is clumsy riding. Rash speech is unwise speech. And rash thinking is wild, foolish thinking and hasty judgment. Now a hasty judgment may readily be a wrong judgment, and even where it turns out right, it is not a scientific judgment, because it is not rightly and by

due process of reason arrived at, but is a mere lucky hit. Free-thinking, in the sense of thinking as you please, may be better than not thinking at all—for a time : but in time it must be brought under a curb. The curb is truth, fact, reality. I must learn to give over thinking as I please, when I find the facts against me. If I will not, I degenerate into a romancer. Romancing has its place ; but to say of anything that it has its place is to say likewise that there are regions in which it has no place. We must not fall to romancing whenever we set to thinking ; we must think at times, and indeed at most times, soberly, seriously, and according to fact—in other words, within the bounds of truth, or at least of probability. There is place and scope for free-thought, yet thought must not run riot in freedom : it cannot be absolutely and everywhere free, but must go into captivity before the face of fact. In this the historian differs from the novelist : the scientific man, including the true philosopher, from the poet. Many a finely written page of narrative has had to be broken up, in consideration of new documents brought to light by historical research. Many a soaring theory has been brought to the ground by sober fact. So far is thought from being free, so constraining is the force of truth.

But another sense may be given to *free-thinking*, that of “finding out truth by your own personal observation, and judging of the result found for yourself, without respect to any authority.” And this, it

must be confessed, is the ordinary sense of the term. In this sense, however, again it must be said, mankind can afford very little of the commodity of free-thinking. Usually, when a man is in any need and is at all in earnest about finding out any particular truth, so far from having recourse to personal observation and resting upon what that seems to disclose, he flies to the authority of some other man, a lawyer, a physician, or one who is in that department an expert. And though the expert's decision is not plain to him on its own merits, he acquiesces in it on authority. There is then not only a captivity of all intellect to truth, but of uninstructed intellect to the instructed, of the ignorant to the wise. This is the *rationale* of the consulting-room.

However, it may be said, this captivity affects the individual, the *ιδιώτης*, but not the race. The race is free. The experts rule their own several provinces. The proconsul of the province of religion is the philosopher. Unfortunately, in that province of religion there are many proconsuls, and they do not agree. Thus poor *ιδιώτης*, the "plain man," who "has not time to look into these things," but would gladly take his religion from his philosopher, is at a loss to what philosopher he shall adhere. Now it might have been in the providence of God to have sent us for our religion to philosophers, as we resort to our medical man for matters of health. Only in that case, it has been shrewdly observed, Providence might have been expected to have arranged for a greater harmony

among philosophers on religious topics than at present obtains. A heavy responsibility would then have devolved upon philosophers, similar to that which falls upon a commander-in-chief appointed in an hour of national peril. The ruling philosopher, or council of philosophers, would prescribe to mankind their duties towards the Deity, what to think of Him, how to serve Him, and the way that would best lead their souls to find everlasting happiness in Him after death. The disposition which one not unfrequently notices in philosophic circles, not to take the universe and human life at all seriously so far as any everlasting issues are concerned, but to treat philosophy as a game in which the play of speculation is more valuable than the result found—any such disposition, I say, would have to be sternly suppressed. Philosophy, whenever it touched upon divine things, would be as serious a game as war. Philosophic thought under these circumstances could scarcely have been called *free*, simply and absolutely *free*. In the multitude of plain men there would have been an obligation to be docile on religious topics to the thought of their guiding philosophers. In those guides themselves there would have been an obligation to explore with reverence such things of God as are accessible to natural reason, to teach them faithfully to the best of their careful understanding of the same, and to be ready to adore in spite of difficulties with which their understanding could not adequately deal, for instance, the presence of evil in creation.

O vitae philosophia dux! exclaims Cicero. In his age, and for four centuries succeeding, philosophy did guide the lives of educated Romans. Stoic and Epicurean, Academic and Neo-Platonist, formed hearts and consciences. It was the practice of wealthy Roman families in the third century to keep a philosopher for spiritual guide, as we keep a chaplain. In those same centuries Christianity appeared. It appealed to some minds, not to others. On consideration we see that it appealed exactly to those minds who were perplexed with a question for which they had found no authentic answer in philosophy, the question of life after death, and punishments and rewards in a world to come. To men of this cast of mind, to men afraid of hell and anxious after some vision of Deity, Christianity appealed not unsuccessfully. To such she still appeals, and offers her guidance, which they accept. The rest of men do not want guides, and must go their own way to such place as they shall find hereafter.

Assuming Deity non-existent, life after death a delusion, and this world of sensible experience to be all in all, the only world—life under that elimination may be likened to unadventurous travelling in the two counties of Oxon and Berks. No grown male needs guidance there; the way is easily made out by the map; there are plenty of people on the roads to tell you; the railway is never far distant; and from the most sequestered corner of either shire your train will bring you into town before midnight. But the

admission of Deity and of personal immortality imports infinity into human life, and perplexity into human calculations. You travel no longer in Oxon or Berks, but on Alps, Himalayas, Andes. You are offered the guidance of the philosopher who "has never been up," but has prospected the glaciers with his telescope from the balcony of his hotel, and "can readily conceive" that there *might* be an ascent here, and "holds it for a working hypothesis" that you might not break your neck there. No better guidance than that? Yes, *no man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared* (John i. 18 : cf. Heb. i. 1). And this declaration is continually kept fresh in the living tradition of the Church. Spoken through the Church, the word of God must be received with all docility, as the inexperienced mountaineer, high up on a steep slope, must be docile to his guide, especially to a divine guide, if such be given him. This is the theory of captivity of thought in the Catholic Church. All that is argued here is that the position is not intrinsically absurd.

This captivity of thought under the guidance of the Church obtains only in matters of faith and morals. Large regions of philosophy, no small part of theology, with the whole of physical science, of fine art, of statesmanship as such, of the military art, of the expediences of political economy, of the useful arts of life—all this wide area of thought lies beyond the Church's ken and control, because the revelation given in

Christ, of which she is the guardian, does not extend to those matters. You will not lose your immortal soul for going astray in that flat midland country of mere human science, where the Church leaves you to yourself. At the same time you will be no more prone to error in such matters than any other man. You will not be less of an accurate reasoner in mathematics, political economy, details of business and practical life, for being an intellectually submissive Catholic. The sweet yoke of Christ does not impair the vigour, or cramp the energies of human intellect. This fact is proved by history and daily experience. Catholics are quite as shrewd as other men.

§ 2. FAITH AS DESCRIBED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the gospels we see faith growing from its first rudiments. The most rudimentary form of faith we find there is belief in Christ as a wonder-worker, a belief which He commonly demanded before He would work any miracles. Thus we read of Him at Nazareth, *And he wrought not many miracles there because of their unbelief* (Matt. xiii. 58). When two blind men asked for their cure, He said to them, *Do ye believe that I can do this thing?* Upon their answering *yes*, He touched their eyes, saying, *According to your faith be it done to you* (Matt. ix. 28, 29). To the woman with the issue of blood, He said, *Thy faith hath saved thee* (Matt. ix. 22). To the Chanaan woman, *Great is thy faith; and her daughter*

was healed forthwith (Matt. xv. 28). In the storm on the lake the disciples are reproached as *men of little faith*, for not realising that *the winds and the sea obey* their Master (Matt. viii. 26, 27). This meaning of *faith* is most apparent in the incident of the boy with the dumb spirit. *If thou canst do anything, help us.* To which Jesus replies, *All things are possible to him that believeth.* Whereupon the boy's father cries aloud, *I believe, help my unbelief* (Mark ix. 22-24). See also Acts iii. 16. But not only as a worker of miracles did Jesus call for faith in Himself, but likewise as one endowed with power to forgive sins, a power which the Jews took to be proper to God alone (Mark ii. 7). Thus he said to the sinful woman, who asked for no bodily cure : *Thy sins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath saved thee* (Luke vii. 48, 50).

A cognate meaning of *faith* is the assurance of being able to work miracles oneself in the power of Christ and His Holy Spirit. This is the *faith* mentioned as a gift of the Holy Ghost in 1 Cor. xii. 9; and is known to divines as *fides miraculorum*. It is not given to all Christians, indeed it is a gift peculiar to few, but it was more generally distributed in apostolic times. The Apostles themselves were filled with it after Pentecost, and our Lord looked for it in them even before they had received the Holy Ghost. Thus in reference to that same dumb idiot boy, when the disciples asked why they could not cast the spirit out of him, they were told : *Because of your want of faith : amen I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain*

of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, etc. (Matt. xvii. 19, 20). Allied to this *fides miraculorum* is faith in prayer; and this is a more general, nay, should be a universal gift even in our time. Of faith in prayer our Saviour says: *All things whatsoever that ye pray for and ask, believe in your getting them and they shall be given unto you* (Mark xi. 24). But we do not usually pray for miracles.

Elias might have called upon the men of his generation to have *faith* in his miraculous powers. John the Baptist might have asked his hearers to *believe* in him as a *man sent from God* (John i. 6), or as a *prophet*. Jesus too prayed to His Father, *that the world may believe that thou has sent me* (John xvii. 21); and He was pleased to be spoken of as *Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee* (Matt. xxi. 11: cf. John iv. 19: vi. 14). But Jesus called for a faith in Himself much greater than that. Why was John the Baptist *a prophet and more than a prophet* except because he was the forerunner of Him concerning whom it was said, *Lo, I send my angel before thy face* (Matt. xi. 9, 10: Mal. iii. 1)? Much more than John the Baptist was Jesus *more than a prophet*: He was the supreme object of prophecy (Luke xxiv. 27: John i. 45: v. 46). He was *the Christ, Messiah* (John iv. 27: ix. 35-38), *Son of man* (Matt. viii. 20: John i. 51: Dan. vii. 13: Acts vii. 56), *Son of the living God* (Matt. xvi. 16). The word that He spoke was the word of God (John xii. 44-50). In the Fourth Gospel the substantive *faith*, and the cor-

responding verb *believe*, is used some forty-two times of faith in the word and person of Jesus, over and above belief in His miraculous power. So in Matt. xviii. 6, *these little ones who believe in me*. Faith in the person of Jesus grew gradually as well in intensity as in objective extent. His chosen disciples saw more and more in Him. He was *sent from God*, He was *a prophet*, He was *King of Israel* (John i. 49 : xii. 13), He was *the holy one of God* (Luke iv. 34 : John vi. 70, according to the best reading, cf. John x. 36) : finally he was *the Christ, the Son of the living God*, and that not by adoption but by nature, "very God of very God." In Him the title *Son of God* is a *more excellent name* (Heb. i. 4). St. Peter was the first man who saluted Him with this name in its fullest and highest sense.¹ Peter's confession of Christ was taken up by Christ Himself, who declared His own Divinity when interrogated by the spiritual chief of His nation. *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God? I am* (Mark xiv. 61, 62). That Jesus spoke of no adopted sonship is evident, as well from the words that follow, *ye shall see the Son of man seated on the right hand of the Power and coming in the clouds of heaven* (the *cloud* being in Scriptural language the visible manifestation of Deity, e.g. 2 Chron. v. 14), as also from the fact that Caiaphas so understood Him to speak, and cried aloud, *Ye hear the blasphemy* (cf. John xix. 7). This was the culminating point of Christ's public teaching.

¹ See *Scripture Manuals for Catholic Schools*, St. Matthew, notes on xiv. 33 : xvi. 16.

His office of Teacher was now over, there remained that of Redeemer. His teaching must be sealed with His blood.

The most noteworthy use of the word *Faith* in the Epistles is in the doctrine of justification by faith (Gal. iii. : Rom. iii. iv. : cf. James ii. 14-26). *Justification* means the forgiveness of sins, and the moral restoration of the sinner to the position of one who is *just*, i.e. conformable to law. In the present order of things, justification means also *sanctification*, or the making of the sinner *holy*, which is putting him in the *state of grace* (C.G. iii. 151, 152). Writing to the Romans and Galatians St. Paul develops the argument that all men are sinners and have fallen from the grace of God (Rom. iii. 9, 23). All men are born in original sin (C.G. iv. 50, 51, 52), and actual sin has abounded. From sin they cannot be justified by works of the Jewish law, nor by all the observances of the Pharisees. No good works done in mortal sin can merit the forgiveness of that sin (C.G. iii. 158, 160). Justification then is ever gratuitous, we are *freely justified* (Rom. iii. 24). The first step, or, as the Council of Trent calls it, "the root of all justification," is faith in Jesus Christ, by whose blood alone we attain forgiveness of our sins (C.G. iii. 153). A further condition is sorrow for sin and resolution to avoid it (C.G. iii. 159), dispositions which we cannot suppose to have been wanting in Abraham (Rom. iv.). Beyond that, in the New Law, justification supposes baptism. The justification by faith upon which St.

Paul insists is, under the New Law, a sacramental justification. Hence he passes straight from faith to baptism (Gal. iii. 26, 27 : Rom. vi.). *Not by works of justice that we have done, but according to His mercy, He hath saved us by the laver of regeneration* (Titus iii. 5). Such a justification by faith and baptism, without works, does not dispense with the need of good works after baptism. St. Paul was not the man to issue to baptized Christians licences to sin.

I come now to the most formal treatment of faith that we find in the whole of the New Testament, Hebrews xi. xii. 1, 2. And first we have something that looks like a definition, but which will prove on inspection to be rather a generic description. I give the Greek, the Latin Vulgate, and what I take to be the best English translation :—

ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.

Est autem fides sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium.

Faith is a firm assurance of things looked for, an indicator of things unseen.

The most important words here are ὑπόστασις (*substantia*), and ἔλεγχος (*argumentum*). *Substance of things looked for* in this context makes nonsense. In its popular sense, 'substance' means 'the main portion of,' as we speak of 'the substance of a discourse.' Faith is not the main portion of things hoped for. In its philosophical sense, 'substance' stands opposed

to ‘accidents,’ and so we speak of ‘transubstantiation.’ The distinction of substance and accident is wholly irrelevant here. The key to the meaning of *substantia* in this passage of Hebrews may be found in an opening verse of Psalm lxviii. : *Infixus sum in limo profundi et non est substantia* (οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπόστασις, LXX) which means “I am stuck fast in the mire of the deep, and there is nothing *under* to *stand* upon”—i.e. “there is no footing.” Faith is a *footing* in things not yet seen and possessed, but looked for to appear in the future. Now a mental *footing* means a *firm assurance*, as appears by the following texts. In Psalm xxxviii. 7, we read, ἡ ὑπόστασις μου παρά σοί ἐστιν, *substantia mea apud te est* (Vulg.), which means “my firm assurance is with thee.” In Ezechiel xix. 5, we read of the lioness that has lost her cub, ἀπόλετο ἡ ὑπόστασις αὐτῆς, *periiit expectatio ejus* (Vulg.), “her support is gone.” Lastly, in this same Epistle to the Hebrews we read (iii. 14) : “We are made partakers of Christ, if only we hold fast our first assurance (τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑπαστάσεως, *initium substantiae ejus*) firm unto the end,” where the translation of ὑπόστασεως by *assurance* is warranted by the repeated mention of *disbelief*, or *disobedience*, in the context (vers. 12, 18, 19), and of *faith* (iv. 2, 3).

The word ἔλεγχος, *argumentum*, is the English word *test*, in the sense in which the chemist speaks of ‘the test for mercury,’ meaning that which *argues the presence* of mercury, or that which *indicates* mercury in some mixture or combination. Therefore

I translate ἐλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων, "indicator of things unseen." Thus in the mystery of the Altar, faith *indicates* the flesh of Christ in what to the eye is bread.

The *cloud of witnesses*, whose names fill the eleventh chapter, were not ocular witnesses of what they had seen; they were witnesses to the depth and intensity of a tradition of the unseen, in the faith of which tradition sundry of them laid down their lives and died martyrs. The gist of the whole chapter appears in the third verse: *so that the visible world has come to be, not out of visible elements.* This world that meets our senses, and flaunts itself before the eye as the only reality, has, after all, been raised into being by divine power out of unseen depths of nothingness,—an argument that there is a further world, as yet unseen, still most real, which the same power of God shall reveal some day. Like Moses, the Saints have *endured as seeing the invisible* (ver. 29) with the eye of faith. These men of faith, these men with a future before them, can never be otherwise than *strangers and pilgrims upon earth* (ver. 13). They follow in spirit a better leader than Moses, even Jesus, *the author and finisher of our faith* (xii. 2), either *seeing Him and stretching out their hands to Him from afar* (ver. 13), as the patriarchs did, or adoring Him now that He is come. To believe in Israel, and in the great destiny of Israel, and in the teeth of appearances to throw in your lot with the Israelites, as Rahab did (ver. 31), was implicitly to believe in this

Saviour. Of those who thus believed in Him, some were triumphant on earth, working miracles and overturning kingdoms ; others *met with mockery and stripes and imprisonment, and were cudgelled to death without deliverance, in the hope of a better resurrection* (vers. 33-38). Such is faith, the mental realisation of coming events looked for, but not yet evident ; the indicator of things unseen, remaining unseen, and embraced, nevertheless, as eternal realities, in preference to the visible appearances of this transient world.

§ 3. THE GRACE OF FAITH.

Any view of faith as described in the New Testament would be most imperfect without consideration of such texts as the following. *Flesh and blood* [the natural working of the human mind] *hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven* (Matt. xvi. 17). *Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones* (Matt. xi. 25), which could not be said of points of philosophy, science, historical research and scholarship, or Biblical criticism. *See to your calling, brethren, that there are not many of you wise according to the flesh, but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen that he may confound the wise* (I Cor. i. 26, 27). *The natural man receiveth not the things that are of the spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he cannot know them, because they are examined spiritually* (I Cor. ii. 14). *No man can come to me unless the Father that hath sent me draw him. None can come to me unless it be given him of the*

Father (John vi. 44, 65). *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep* (John x. 26, the *sheep* being that which my Father hath given me, *ib.* 29, cf. vi. 37, 39 : xvii. 2, 11, 12, 24 : xviii. 9).

Hence it appears that faith is not a mere intellectual assent to a reasoned conclusion, but is a gift of God ; a gift of God, not in the general sense, in which *every good gift and every perfect gift is from above* (James i. 17),—for in that sense intellectual acumen is a gift of God, and faith is here distinctly marked off from intellectual acumen,—but faith is one of those special supernatural gifts called *graces*. I believe, not because I am a better hand than my neighbour at seeing a reasoned conclusion, but because God in His mercy has given me the grace of faith, and my neighbour has it not.¹ *He hath not done such things for every nation, and his judgments he hath not made manifest to them* (Ps. cxlvii.). *They believed, as many as were ordained to life everlasting* (Acts xiii. 48).

We may distinguish three genetic elements of faith : (1) the external evidences of the credibility of Christianity, evidences within the reach of all educated men in Christian lands ; (2) the teaching authority of the Christian Church ; (3) the inner light of grace vouchsafed to each individual believer. The Church values all three elements. Various dissenters from orthodoxy have essayed to dispense with one element or another. Lamennais and the Traditionalists took

¹ Why he has it not, it is not for me to say. I am not his judge, Matt. vii. 1 : 1 Cor. iv. 5 : Rom. xiv. 4, 10 : James iv. 12.

little account of any evidence adducible even for that fundamental article of the Creed, the existence of God, and preferred to rest the whole structure upon tradition and authority. Gregory XVI's condemnation of Traditionalism was solemnly re-enacted by the Fathers of the Vatican Council. Reason is not everything in faith, but it is a preliminary and a concurrent agency never to be lost sight of. Faith, after all, is for the reasonable. The Reformers of the sixteenth century set aside the living authority of the Church, and trusted to the inner light of the Spirit guiding each individual Christian in his reading of the Bible. The Rationalist ignores all inner light of grace, refuses all appeal to authority whether living or dead, and treats religion like chemistry and medicine, as a mere matter of science and scientific method. He can have no faith, for by the way in which he goes about his researches from the first he assumes that he has no Master.

I find no better words to describe this inner light of grace than those which I wrote in *The Month* many years ago, in an article headed "St. John Chrysostom on Faith and Reason." "Actual grace, of which alone there is question here, is an impression made by God Himself directly upon the understanding and upon the will of man, moving him to will certain things in order to his eternal salvation, and supporting him in so willing. These impressions are not, strictly speaking, caused by any sensible object, as a picture, or a man speaking; nor have they a spontaneous birth within the mind according to any law of association. They

are divine interferences, gratuitous, and uncaused, except by the free will and bounty of God Himself stepping in. Created agencies are *occasions*, but the prime mover and proper *cause* of grace is always God. Grace indeed is not miraculous, because it is part of God's ordinary providence in this world ; but it is as little traceable to any natural cause as any miracle whatever. When the searcher after religious truth has arrived by prayerful reasoning at a moral certainty that a God who cannot deceive has revealed this or that doctrine, there ensues in his soul a movement of grace, called by theologians an "inner locution," confirmatory of his reasoned conclusion. It is not the faintest whisper audible to sense : it is *the word of God, reaching to the division of the soul and of the spirit, living and effectual* (Heb. iv. 12), if the man chooses to listen to it. This first locution is addressed to the intellect. The next appeal is to the will. Here the voice of grace is at once an authoritative command to submit and a fatherly invitation to trust. 'Believe, my child, it is I, the very Truth, who speak to thee.' It is in fact, the, *It is I, fear not*, of the gospel (Matt. xiv. 27 : Mark v. 36 : Luke xxiv. 36). If the soul corresponds to the grace that is given to it, there follows a movement of the will bidding the intellect to assent, and thereupon follows the assent itself of the intellect upon the one motive of God revealing, which assent of the intellect is the act of faith. The firmness of this assent is the *certitude* of faith, the *πληροφορία πίστεως* of Hebrews x, 22 : the *ὑπόστασις*, or

firm foothold, of Hebrews xi. 1 : iii. 14. It differs from all other certitude, first, in being *supernatural*, the response of the soul to an inner locution of the Holy Ghost ; secondly, in being paid as a bounden duty,—there is no other proposition but articles of faith, or akin to faith, to which we are bound to give an intellectual assent ; thirdly, being paid as a duty, it is paid not by physical necessity, but freely,—in this agreeing with many natural assents and differing from others, namely, from those in which the proposition assented to is self-evident. . . . Innocent XI condemned this proposition : ‘The will cannot make the assent of faith to be in itself firmer than the weight of reasons moving to assent deserves.’ The proposition is rank Pelagianism. It entirely ignores the supernatural element which is of the essence of faith. We cannot indeed dispense with external teaching. God will not take upon Himself the part of catechist : we must learn our catechism from our fellow-men. Nor can we dispense with arguments and motives of credibility proportioned to the capacity of the hearer, simple considerations for simple folk, elaborate inductions for the learned. But then on the top of that must come the inner locution direct from God, or there can be no faith.”¹ So far *The Month*.

The need of grace supervening upon argument may be illustrated from this experience of daily life. Several persons call upon me and urge me to join in

¹ *Interiori instinctu Dei invitantis*, St. Thomas, 2^a-2^{ae}, q. 2, art. 9, ad. 3.

some undertaking. I hear all that they have to say arguing why I should join, and am impressed by it, nevertheless I stand out against them and politely refuse. They can do nothing with me till they put up some one else to ask. That person somehow has got the key of my heart. He uses no new arguments, in fact hardly argues at all: he simply asks and I comply. I might not perhaps have complied with his asking if they had not argued the case before; nevertheless they might have argued without end and I should never have given in, but for the intercessor whom they were skilful enough to employ. Now God holds the key to every human heart. *He openeth and no man shutteth* (Apoc. iii. 7). Only by the use of God's key is any man ever brought to believe any doctrine with divine faith. *No man can say from his heart, Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost* (1 Cor. xii. 3). And yet some preaching, some argumentation, some instruction, must go before his making that profession of faith in our Lord's Divinity.

This brings us abreast of a great difficulty. If faith is a gift of God, if *without faith it is impossible to please God* (Heb. xi. 6), how is it that the gift is not given to all men, how is it that *not all men obey the gospel* (Rom. x. 16)? This difficulty racked St. Paul's heart. Loving his nation as he did, as one born a *Hebrew of Hebrews* (Phil. iii. 5), he could not understand the mass of his countrymen rejecting the salvation offered them by their true Messiah, Jesus. He wrestles with the difficulty throughout three arduous

chapters (Rom. ix. x. xi.). He is comforted with the assurance of a better state of mind to come about before the end of the world (xi. 25, 26). Finally, he is compelled to throw his perplexity upon the *inscrutable judgments and unsearchable ways* of God, and to cry out *Who knoweth the mind of the Lord?* (xi. 33, 34). What St. Paul did not know, we know not either, and have no means of finding out. Dominican and Jesuit, Calvinist, Jansenist, Catholic, have wrangled over the distribution of grace that is *efficacious* and is acted on, and grace again that is *sufficient*, but is sinfully rejected. Many a heresy has been fallen into in the attempt to penetrate these mazes. Be it our humbler and safer effort to mark off on the outskirts of this vast wilderness some little ground of fact, and some little more ground of conjecture. In the first place then it is certain, with the certainty of Catholic faith as defined against the Jansenists, that no grace, and consequently not the grace of faith, overpowers the will in such a way as to take away its freedom, and render the rejection of the grace a physical impossibility.¹

Faith is meritorious ; now there is no merit in being

¹ "Neither does the man himself do nothing at all in receiving the inspiration, seeing that he can also reject it" (Council of Trent, Sess. 6, cap. 5). The second of the five celebrated propositions of Jansenius, that "interior grace in the state of fallen nature is never resisted," was "declared and condemned as heretical." Clement XI in the *Unigenitus* condemns this proposition of Quesnel, that "grace is the work of the almighty hand of God, which nothing can hinder or retard."

simply overpowered. The educated man of the twentieth century, who still believes in the gospel, so believes as not to be without a workable capacity of disbelief. He believes by an effort of will, which he is by no means constrained to put forth. And as men can resist the grace and refuse the offer of faith, so some men do resist, as many of the Pharisees did in our Lord's time (John xii. 37-49), and their *sin remaineth* (John ix. 41). But what particular men in our time commit this sin, it is not given to us to know: we are not as the Lord, *who hath moulded their hearts one by one, who understandeth all their works* (Ps. xxxii. 15); and in our ignorance we are silenced by our Lord's precept, *Judge not* (Matt. vii. 1).

We are forbidden the judgment of condemnation, but not that of charitable conjecture. In bygone days, Catholics, and especially Catholic priests, were not so prone to judge charitably of persons not belonging to the visible fold of the Church. Such persons in the sixteenth century were often apostate Catholics. In the seventeenth, they were persecutors; and it is not easy to believe in the faith and charity of one who hunts you to death. In the age after that they were still bigoted adversaries, and hard names were still called on both sides. Now, in many parts of the world, although not everywhere, the pelting shower is over, the sun has come out, and the traveller takes off his cloak. The amenities of social life are exchanged between men of the most opposite religious views; and religion is discussed, keenly at times, but

without bitterness. You take your host or guest at table to be too good a man for hell-fire ; and yet you hardly dare hope that he will ever become a Catholic. You begin to devise excuses for him, which perhaps God may accept,—ways of salvation for him which *God our Saviour, who wisheth all men to be saved* (1 Tim. ii. 3), may approve, or haply improve upon. One such hypothesis of possible salvation would be this. God, it may be thought, draws all men in the same direction, that is, towards Himself, but does not draw them all equally far, nor purpose, as things actually stand, to draw them all equally far. He is satisfied with any man who walks in the way of God so far as God is pleased to draw him. To those who are drawn the whole way, and willingly follow, even to the fulness of Catholic truth, a greater reward is given. Why God does not draw all men all the way to the fulness of Catholicism, who shall answer? who knows? Any answer of ours must be guess-work : let our guessing then take this form. Many theologians, to wit, Molina and his school, hold that God knows what any man would elect to do, even under circumstances in which that individual shall never be placed. On the Molinist view, then, God might see that if He were to offer to draw some particular man, Balbus, to the full light of Catholicism, Balbus would hang back, would never be a Catholic, and so resisting the grace of conversion would never save his soul, but be condemned to hell-fire. God thereupon may in mercy hold back from Balbus grace which Balbus never

would follow, and give him only such grace as he will follow.

If any such hypothesis as this were true, one practical counsel follows; and indeed it is good counsel upon any hypothesis and in all cases; that is, to encourage every good point of virtue and religion which you find in your non-Catholic neighbour, such as confidence in prayer and the providence of God, zeal for the honour of God, due observance of the Lord's Day, respect for the Bible as the Word of God, charity to the unfortunate, sorrow for sin, confidence in Christ as Mediator. All these things make for Catholicism, and bring the man nearer to the true Church. They go to Christianise and Catholicise him. Whether he ever arrives or does not arrive to travel the whole distance that separates him from the Roman obedience, one may at any rate hope that he will be faithful to the full end and measure of the grace given him, and go as far as that grace leads him.

Another illustration. I take a gas-jet and turn it full on. That represents the light of Christ as it shines in all its splendour upon the children of the Holy Catholic Church. To have that full light flashed upon you from heaven, and to turn away your eyes from its brightness, and refuse submission to the Catholic Church and the Holy See, is a deadly sin,—by whom committed, God only knows. I turn the said gas-jet half down. I have there represented the light of an honest Anglican, who believes as much as God has revealed to him, all that God so far has given

him grace to believe. He, too, is a well-loved child of God, although not so favoured as the Catholic. Again I turn the light down till it is reduced to one little burning bead. That is the figure of him who believes according to the minimum prescribed by St. Paul, that *there is a God, and that he is a giver of reward to them that seek him* (Heb. xi. 6), and through no fault of his own does not see his way at present to hold any more dogma than that. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not exclude this man from *εὐαρεστῆσαι*, *being well-pleasing to God*. What God will do with that man ultimately, we need not here conjecture; one thing is certain, that in his present frame of mind he is not liable to the penalty of hell-fire for defect of faith.

Venerable Bede speaks of the Church as being *tuta intrantibus, laboriosa adeuntibus*, "toilsome to approach, safe when you are within." The habit of faith in a Catholic is very strong: it is the strongest of all his virtues, a fact quite consistent with its being the one virtue against which he is most vehemently tempted. Storms do not make a vessel weak, but prove its strength. By every Sacrament received, by every hearty prayer, by every operation of grace within his soul,—and such operations in the Catholic are almost continuous,—his faith is strengthened, till it comes to be intertwined with the very fibres of his being. Anglicans, who come nearest to our position, sometimes think us arrogant, self-conceited, full of a sort of Pharisaic righteousness in our faith, and prone to

despise others ; and indeed we do sometimes forget that faith even in us is a gift of God, and none of our own deserving. We should carry our faith humbly. At the same time we should carry it proudly, with such holy pride as is professed in the *Magnificat*.

§ 4. FAITH, INTUITION, WILL.

Intuition, or Insight, is called by St. Thomas *intellectus* (*νοῦς*), and is distinguished from *ratio* (*διάνοια*) or discursive reason. Faith is a supernatural intuition, an intuition allied rather to the practical than to the speculative intellect,—having more in it of the resolve of the commander in the field, with the enemy before him, than of the leisurely play of thought proper to the philosopher. And, like other practical intuitions, faith requires a man to put his foot down and stand by what he sees, not to toy with it, hesitate over it, discuss contingencies and balance possibilities, till all opportunity of action has passed. For want of this readiness to put his foot down the philosopher is wont to prove what is called a ‘visionary’ in the field of statesmanship and war ; and the same, without a vigorous effort of will to overcome his hesitations, can scarcely come to the Christian faith. Not only “conscience doth make cowards of us all,” as Hamlet says (Act iii. sc. 1), but so also does the disposition, so characteristic of Hamlet himself, “to consider too curiously,” as Horatio puts it (Act v. sc. 1).

And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought ;
And enterprises of great pith and moment ¹
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

“ And now, dear Reader, time is short, eternity is long. Put not from you what you have here found ; regard it not as mere matter of present controversy ; set not out resolved to refute it, nor determine that to be truth which you wish to be so. Time is short, eternity is long.” Newman on *Development*, last words.

¹ To wit, the enterprise of eternal salvation.

STUDY II.

PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

§ I. PROOF FROM LOCAL MOTION (C.G. i. 13).

Eumenes. Readers of your *Of God and His Creatures*, as you call your Translation, have got the impression that you do not think St. Thomas very felicitous in his main argument in the *Contra Gentiles* (i. 13) to prove the existence of God. Let me read it: "A thing is in motion because something else puts and keeps it in motion. That mover either is itself in motion or not. If it is not in motion, our point is gained which we proposed to prove, namely, that we must posit something which moves other things without being itself in motion, and this we call God. But if the mover is itself in motion, then it is moved by some other mover. Either then we have to go on to infinity, or we must come to some mover which is motionless; but it is impossible to go on to infinity, therefore we must posit some motionless prime mover."

Sosias. Listen, Eumenes. St. Thomas had a profound veneration for Aristotle. He headed the Aristotelian movement in the University of Paris,

where this *Contra Gentiles* first came out in the form of lectures. When he delivered them, he was in the prime of life, full of enthusiasm of youthful genius striking out new ways. Aristotle was a novelty then, and the Master was about his thirty-third year. All good was to come out of Aristotle, if it possibly could be found there. To Aristotle, therefore, the Master went for his proof of the existence of God ; and finding the proof from motion developed at large in the *Physics* (viii.), and again in the *Metaphysics* (xi.), he embraced that and set it forth exultingly. He never lost confidence in it ; and in his *Summa Theologica*, arguing the existence of God, he says : “ The first and manifest way of proof is that which is derived from motion ” (I^a, q. 2, art. 3). Nevertheless, not St. Thomas, but Aristotle is the author of the argument ; it is Aristotelian rather than Thomist. Wellington said he never slept comfortably when Massena was in the field against him. I am never comfortable when I differ either from St. Thomas or from Aristotle. Therefore I listen willingly to what modern Thomists contend, that it is doing their Master an injustice to confine the argument to mere local motion. It is, I hope, in the light of modern science, doing St. Thomas no disrespect, to argue that mere local motion, or the transference of a particle of matter from place to place, is by itself no proof of the existence of God. If St. Thomas never meant to say that it was, all the better. “ Dans une philosophie du monde (which means, I presume, on the Newtonian conception of matter and

motion), la preuve *ex motu* n'a plus aucune valeur ;" so writes C. Dessoulevay in *Revue de Philosophie*, Juin, 1906. The like remark was made to me by a philosopher second to none in the University of Oxford, at the end of a course of lectures which he gave on the Aristotelian argument from motion. All that Aristotle understood by *motion* I do not undertake to say ; but confine his argument to *local motion*, and it is valueless.

Eumenes. Beware of the mace of the mighty Stagyrite !

Sosias. The labyrinthine man ! I have been through the labyrinth of *Metaphysics*, xi. c. 7 and *Physics*, viii. c. 5, under the guidance of the excellent old commentator Silvester Maurus, S.J., who makes Aristotle say so much that he never did say, but perhaps ought to have said.

Eumenes. The only way to interpret Aristotle, as I have heard an eminent Aristotelian declare.

Sosias. Well, I have carried out of the labyrinth one fragment, a thing that Aristotle really does say. I know how rash it is to comment on one passage of Aristotle, if you have not read him right through. I contemplate no such rashness. I am not commenting on his general sense, but I note this admission : "there will not be any prime mover at all, if of two bodies each shall move the other."¹ This condition is exactly verified by the Newtonian law of gravitation :

¹ οὔτε γὰρ ἔσται πρῶτον κινῶν εἴ γε ἐκάτερον κινήσει ἐκάτερον. *Physics*, viii. c. 5, n. 18.

matter attracts matter : the moon 'moves,' i.e. pulls at the earth, as is seen by the tides ; and earth 'moves,' or pulls at moon, keeping that satellite from flying off into space. They move each other ; so, on Aristotle's admission, there is no prime mover.

Eumenes. And all that pretty scheme of the ten crystal spheres, the outermost of them, the *primum mobile*, giving motion to all the rest and being itself the prime cause of all the movements in the universe, is swept away (*C.G.* iii. 22, 82).

Sosias. Yes, it is gone. The material creation, as we now see it, is made up of myriads of millions of material substances, the ultimate nature of which Science has not yet determined ; each material substance is at once active and passive, *active* in this that it determines other material substances to motion, *passive* in this that itself receives determination to motion from other material substances, *inert* (not *inactive*) in this that it cannot determine itself to motion. *Matter* in modern language means *material substance* ; but in scholastic philosophy it means the *passive side* of material substance. These two meanings ere now have been confused, and matter spoken of as wholly passive. But were material substance, or aught else in the universe, merely passive, it would vanish from existence. What is passive, is active also, but *non secundum idem*. Material substances are ever essentially in act upon whatever comes within the sphere of their activity. They are incessantly, in every direction, pushing and pulling, attracting, repell-

ing one another. Once existent, they need no motor outside themselves to set up movement amongst them : they fall to work upon another, as a crowd of boys, released from constraint, take to talking. A prime mover is as superfluous as a prime talker.

Eumenes. But don't theologians tell us that matter cannot act without the concurrence of God?

Sosias. Yes, but that divine concurrence, not being evident to sense, is not a fact of physical science. We are here dealing with a proof of the existence of God purporting to be drawn from local motion as a fact of physical science. The prime mover that we ban as superfluous is the physical outermost sphere of the Ptolemaic astronomy. We admit of course that there can be no activity, motor or mental, apart from God : but that has to be proved in some other way : vain is the attempt to reduce all local motion to one central energising created motive power. The realm of motion is a democracy, not a monarchy.¹

Eumenes. Can you tell me who first set on foot

¹ "Science may start from a mass supposed to be in motion, I say, *supposed to be in motion*. If it were at rest, motion would be produced as a result of gravitation: but the supposition of rest throughout is a very special and therefore restrictive one. That of motion would be the most general case" (Sir George Stokes). Every body and every particle of matter is under stress of many forces determining it to motion. Rest is simply a particular case of these determinants counteracting one another. The difference of rest and motion, or of the equilibrium or non-equilibrium of forces, has scarcely any interest for Science.

this now antiquated astronomical proof of the existence of God?

Sosias. I refer you to Plato, *Laws*, x. 893 B—899 C. In Plato (I don't say in Aristotle or St. Thomas) the proof rests upon two assumptions: (a) that *no movement can start itself*, which is true: (b) that *nothing but movement can start movement*, which is highly dubious, involving as it does the resolution of gravitation into impact. Plato argues that soul is everywhere prior to material substance. Soul, he says, moves itself; he is thinking of the intellectual movement of thought: material substance is moved by soul. So he accounts for the movements of the heavenly bodies. He concludes: "Concerning all stars and the moon, and years and months and all seasons, what other account shall we give than this, that since soul or souls have been shown to be causes of them all, and these souls are good with all goodness, we must say that they are gods, whether existing in bodies, and so, as living things, adorning all heaven, or in any other way and manner? Can anyone allow this, and still sustain the assertion that all things are not full of gods?" (*Laws*, 899 B).

Eumenes. None of us would care to be theists in that Platonic fashion. Is not the argument for the existence of God from local motion a relic of this psychical astronomy, which Plato got probably from the Pythagoreans; he bequeathed it to Aristotle; from Plato and Aristotle it went to the Neo-Platonists, from them to the Arabs, from the Arabs to the

mediæval Schoolmen (cf. *C.G.* iii. 23), till finally it was cast out by Newton?

Sosias. I should say so.

§ 2. PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD FROM
CHANGEABLE, OR CONTINGENT BEING.

Eumenes. First, a little biology. I am curious on the fact that Aristotle, and the Schoolmen in his wake, saw no difficulty in spontaneous generation, *abiogenesis*, or the generation of living from inanimate matter. Can you produce from your Notes the sayings of Aristotle on this matter?

Sosias. Here they are: "Of living things, some are engendered of living things of the same kind and same shape, others are engendered spontaneously and not of living things of the same kind: of the latter, some are engendered of decomposing soil and vegetables, as is the case with many insects, others in the bodies of living animals out of waste matter in their several parts." . . . "Some of the fish called *kestreus* (Latin *mugil*) are not engendered by intercourse of the sexes, but grow out of mud and sand." . . . "They (purple-fish), like other molluscs, grow out of mud and putrefaction. . . . In a word, all shell-fish are generated spontaneously in mud, differing according to the difference of the mud,—in filthy mud, oysters; in sandy mud, cockles; and about the holes in small rocks, ascidians and barnacles and the creatures that are found on the surface, such as limpets and sea-snails." . . . "Some grubs are engendered of

living things, . . . others not of living things, but spontaneously,—some from the dew that falls on the leaves ordinarily in spring, but often also in winter when there is a long spell of moist warm weather,—others in decomposing filth and rottenness, . . . others in the hair of animals, others in their flesh, others in their excrements as well without as within the body” (*Historia Animalium*, v. c. 1, n. 5 : c. 11, n. 3 : c. 15, nn. 2, 16 : c. 19, n. 3 : see further *ib.* vi. cc. 15, 16). For complement take this from St. Thomas : “The virtue of the heavenly bodies is sufficient for the engendering of sundry less perfect animals out of matter thereto disposed” (*Summa*, 1, q. 91, art. 2, ad 2). And so the Middle Ages generally. Thus prepared to leap from the inanimate to the animate, they were kept from a wild career of Evolution by a rooted belief in the permanence of species. When Darwinism came, the world well knew the worthlessness of these allegations of *abiogenesis*, founded on the densest ignorance of germs, spores, microbes, and all the revelations of the microscope.

Eumenes. Thank you. And now for the argument from Change. And lest, keeping close to the Aristotelian ἀλλοίωσις we lose ourselves in chemical disquisitions, let us say the argument from changeable, or contingent, to unchangeable, or necessary being. The argument is familiar to me. *Contingent* is defined “that which actually is, but possibly might not be.” Such a being, it is argued, cannot have in itself the reason of its own existence : it cannot exist of itself ;

for so it would be *necessary*. Therefore the reason of its existence must lie in some other being. If that too is contingent, it must depend on another, and that on another, to infinity in coexistence, or eternity in succession. But you do not get rid of contingency, you do not make your series self-supporting, by extending it to infinity or eternity. What is true of every term of the series is true of the whole series, that it has not in itself the reason of its own being: therefore the entire series must depend upon some term outside of the series, which has in itself the reason of its own being. In other words, even though you prolong the series to infinity, the series remains contingent, as every term in it is contingent: and such contingent being must depend upon some other being, which shall be a necessary being; and that necessary Being is the Eternal God.

Sosias. Even so. I think we have at last done justice to *C.G.* i. 13, taken on its metaphysical side.

Eumenes. But there is a sceptical bias in man's rational nature, as there is a sensual bias in his animal nature. A 'destructive dialogue' is easier than a 'constructive,' as satire is easier than history, and unmeasured invective the readiest course of eloquence. Etymologically, the very terms *philosopher* ('lover of wisdom') and *sceptic* ('prone to peep about') are closely allied. So be not surprised at my untamed philosophic and sceptic spirit starting two difficulties against our argument from contingent to necessary being. First, I will go on the side of Aristotle, and

argue upon the Aristotelian conception of substance : taking my stand on that, I will contend for a multitude of necessary beings, and therefore not one sole God. Then I will go over to the modern side, and discarding substance as a nonentity, I will argue that all reality is necessary, or, if you like, all reality contingent,—antithesis of *necessary* and *contingent* being obsolete and irrelevant, when both are absorbed in the concept of *actually coming to be*.

Sosias. I am not surprised. Pray, develop your arguments.

Eumenes. In the first argument I will confine myself for simplicity sake to the material universe. That is made up, I contend, of the perishable and the imperishable. Perishable are all variable properties of things, unstable combinations, motions, phenomena, accidents. Imperishable are substances, the “building stones of the universe,” as they have been styled : I mean atoms, or now that the discovery of radium has shown us the slow breaking up even of atoms, let me specify the elements into which atoms are broken up, electrons, or ions, or whatever they be, till we come down, if down we must, to Boscovichian and Baymist points, or force-centres,—something ultimate which has been from the beginning, and shall be, so long as matter lasts, which is presumably for ever. There you have necessary being, myriads of necessary beings, and no God. Your argument from contingent to necessary does not land you further than these ultimate elements of matter, which I will venture to

call, by some specialisation of Aristotelian terminology, *substances*.

Sosias. I do not know whether your sceptic mind will be satisfied, but St. Thomas seems to have thought of that difficulty, and I will give you his answer. Kindly turn to *C.G.* ii. and read chap. xxx., "How Absolute Necessity may have place in Creation." There St. Thomas virtually allows that these ultimate elements of matter are absolute necessities in the order of physical science. Physical science always presupposes physical nature ; and these elements are necessary, if physical (corporeal) nature is to be at all. But in the widest view of all they are not necessary, but contingent,—conditioned upon God's free will to create corporeal nature.

Eumenes. That is all very well on the supposition of the existence of a God, but I thought we were engaged upon proofs of the Divine existence.

Sosias. It is something to see how the existence of God stands with the permanence of the ultimate components of matter, and consequent necessity of physical laws. But without assuming the existence of God, three answers are possible, which I will call the *metaphysical* answer, the *economic* answer, and the *psychological* answer. The adversary's position is that of Lucretius and Epicurus and the materialist school generally. They hold that atoms, or electrons, or ultimate elements of matter, whatever they be, *solida pollentia simplicitate*, are enough to account for all phenomena, or at any rate all phenomena of the

inorganic world, and that there is nothing in these ultimate elements to point to a Creator. The Catholic metaphysician will reply that if these primordial components of the material universe are uncreated, then they must be self-existent; and if self-existent, then all-perfect, and therefore intelligent, which they are not.

Eumenes. A good argument. I admit the several steps, and therefore the conclusion, which is, that these primordial elements are not uncreated. But why do I admit it? Because I already believe in one only self-existent Being, who is the all-perfect God. If I did not already believe in Him, the argument, excellent though it be in itself, would not convert me to theism. To me it is like the argument: "God is virtually all: He is therefore the apt producing cause of all" (*C.G.* ii. 15, n. 6): encouragement to a theist, but not conversion for an atheist.

Sosias. No argument can knock atheism out of a man who has already made up his mind to be an atheist. The most irrefragable arguments for theism are not resistless; they may be, and they are, resisted. I pass to what I call the 'economic' argument, by which I mean the 'argument from design.' If these force-centres simply danced up and down, playing and coquetting with one another to the production of a hodge-podge or chaos, I might well fail to see, in their purposeless thrillings and throbbings, any convincing evidence of the existence of a Prime Mover, First Cause, or Creator. Such a state of things is supposed

in the *Timaeus* of Plato, a primitive chaos, self-existent, uncreated, "not at rest, but in irregular and disorderly commotion": this chaos God "took over, and reduced it from disorder to order" (*Tim.* 30 A). This theory nowadays will find no friends. The theologian will quarrel with it as supposing an uncreated chaos. How came such a chaos to exist? It has not in itself the reason of its own being: it is a contingent thing and needs a Creator. Or, if it is not contingent but necessary and self-existent, then, as we have argued just now, it ought to be sovereignly perfect. The physicist will quarrel with the theory as introducing a divine interposition *per saltum*, a thing not looked for in physics, and requiring strong proof from some other source before any physicist can accept it. Physical Science ever finds Nature doing her own work, and expects Nature to have done it even from the first, unless Metaphysics or Revealed Religion can make out an exception. High mathematicians from Laplace to Poincaré have speculated on the primitive nebula, and thence drawn out a possible cosmogony of sun and planets, but always by natural process. The initial wonder, by these mathematicians supposed, and rightly supposed, is that the primeval elements of things were not flung down in a chaos, but so deftly, so intelligently laid down, that out of their primitive collocation there has arisen this orderly world. There is Order from the first, there is Design, there is an argument for the existence of God.

Eumenes. I see the *Contra Gentiles* contains one

brief statement of the Argument from Design in a quotation from St. John Damascene : “ In the world we see things of different natures falling into harmonious order, not rarely or fortuitously, but always or for the most part : therefore there must be some Power by whose providence the world is governed ; and that we call God ” (C.G. i. 13). I observe in the note on that page that you appeal to the argument from ‘ primitive collocation, ’ which really is the cosmogonic form of the Argument from Design. But, they say, the Argument from Design proves indeed that Mind has planned and arranged the Universe, but not that the said Mind is infinite, seeing that the Universe is of finite perfection.

Sosias. Rather an excess of subtlety, I think. *C'est le premier pas qui coute.* The first step is to prove a Supreme Mind. Prove that, and you are rid of Materialism. And it is with the Materialist that we are now dealing. One enemy at a time. Against the Materialist there is no argument like the old argument from Design.

Eumenes. Which he endeavours to set aside in the name of Evolution.

Sosias. Biological Evolution, equally with mathematical Cosmogony, is compatible with Design, nay postulates it. Away from Design, what shifts Evolutionists have to make, what chapters of lucky accidents to invent, in order to secure the varieties that they need, and the permanence of those varieties, to say nothing of requisite primitive potentialities. Suppose,

by impossibility, Intelligence had been an unknown factor in the world till now; and some twentieth century Darwin had discovered Intelligence; and lifting up his hand had cried, "I have it, Intelligence is the guiding power to Evolution"; would not a cry of relief have gone round the perplexed ranks of Science, and all would have thronged round the discoverer, and shaken him by the hand, crying: "Of course Evolution is guided by Intelligence: how came we not to think of that before?"

Eumenes. Guided by one Intelligence or by many?

Sosias. By one, so surely as there is unity in the system of the world. By one Intelligence, but by many unconscious vital impulses, which I call *nisus*, or ὄρμαί: St. Thomas calls them *appetitus*. I have also heard them called "bathmic forces."

Eumenes. You speak like an oracle. Sir Oracle, explain yourself.

Sosias. You are aware perhaps that Oxford men, imitating the Lacedaemonians of old, as Plato portrays them (*Protagoras*, 342 C), do assemble at night, excluding strangers, and practise upon one another all manner of sophistical discussion. In the various 'Societies' that meet between the hours from 9 to 11 p.m., you get at the real mind of the University better than you do in Lectures. In one of those discussions I heard thrown out, as a thing obvious and recognised by all, what was to me a discovery that I had long been in search of, a rational account of the Aristotelian and Thomist 'vegetable soul.'

Eumenes. Which plays such a part in the treatise on Traducianism (*C.G.* ii. 86-89). I have looked over a cabbage garden, and wondered where the souls were. Pray do tell me, where is the soul in a cabbage? what is a vegetable soul?

Sosias. Listen then to the esoteric teaching of Oxford. And, joking apart, I believe this answer to be true. A vegetable soul is an unconscious principle, infused into organic matter, by virtue whereof that matter unconsciously strives after an end of organic perfection, which is its own proper development. Let me explain myself. In *C.G.*, p. 168, I read in the note: "But concerning any *vis formativa*, directrix of this wonderful process of conception and development; and about the origin and function of soul, vegetative, sentient, and intelligent, we remain shrouded in all the darkness of the thirteenth century." That darkness is painted there rather too thick. The vegetative soul of the embryo—or, if you will, the sentient soul acting in its vegetative capacity—is the *vis formativa et directrix* of the development of the embryo. There is nothing more to be said about it. That is why the human embryo grows into a man, because it has, or receives in due time, a human soul, which besides being rational is also vegetative; and as vegetative, it guides the building up of the human creature.

Eumenes. Then, according to you, the vegetative soul is the *appetitus*?

Sosias. We had better avoid the word *appetitus*,

because in St. Thomas it means many things. I prefer to call it a *nisus*, or ὄρμη (we might call it in English a 'lead'), an unconscious striving after development proper to the kind. Observe that even our volitional strivings are continually sinking to the level of strivings unconscious and automatic, and yet they continue to be operative for all that. I start out to walk from Oxford to Abingdon. I know the six mile road well enough. I hardly give it a thought: I talk philosophy all the way with a friend: yet ere the second hour is out we find ourselves at Abingdon. The purpose, ὄρμη, *nisus*, 'lead,' sunk into unconsciousness, has guided our steps all the way. It is almost as though we had created a little vegetative or kinetic soul, to serve the occasion. The vegetative soul, I say, is very clever, considering the exquisite results which it achieves; but, regarding its manner of achieving them, you must pronounce it quite stupid and dull: happily perhaps for us, it never rises into consciousness at all of its exact *modus operandi*. The unconscious *nisus* achieves splendid work: but the glory of that work must be ascribed to Him who designed and founded it. If this account of the vegetable soul is correct, you cannot explain the fact by any blind materialistic Evolution.

Eumenes. No, neither that nor anything else.

Sosias. This has been somewhat of a digression; but before ending it, I will refer you to an Article in the *Contemporary Review* for February, 1906, entitled, *Thought, Consciousness, Life*, by Sir Edward Fry, as

confirming all that I have said. Let me read to you these lines : "Life is thus seen not as one among many chemical or physical forces, or chemical or physical laws, not as adding to them or counteracting them ; but as a something standing on a quite different plane of being, and yet controlling and guiding those forces to determined ends, to ends which those forces never would have reached without this determination and control " (p. 244).

Eumenes. Lucretius is wrong : atoms and void are not enough to account for the visible universe. I am satisfied : but as you promised me a third argument, which you termed 'psychological,' I am fain to call for it.

Sosias. I have no piece of dialectics ready to serve you. I will ask you only to recollect all that you have ever read or heard of the Idealist philosophy, in connexion with such names as Berkeley and Kant. Without being an Idealist, one may admit that there is something in Idealism : the great minds that have upheld it are not all utterly mistaken. The truth that is in Idealism I take to be this : that Mind must preside over all Reality ; and that a reality undiscerned by any mind is no reality at all, but sheer nothingness. The primordial elements of matter cannot owe their reality to any human mind, for man hardly knows them yet : they are therefore dependent upon a Mind superhuman and omniscient, which is God. That is the proof, and there I leave it. Now I call upon you in turn to fulfil your promise of going

over for argument's sake to the modern side, and putting away substance as a nonentity, and the antithesis of 'contingent' and 'necessary' as obsolete, to prove that all knowable reality consists of changes which actually do occur, and that to speak of any change that 'might have' occurred, or 'might' occur, as distinct from what has occurred, is occurring and shall occur, is a phraseology permissible to the vulgar, but inadmissible in the mouth of a philosopher.

Eumenes. All that concatenation follows upon the simple avowal that there is no free will anywhere in heaven or on earth. Hobbes saw the sequence clearly; and, denying free will, he was not afraid of the corollary, that nothing is possible except the actual. And however Monism otherwise differs from the philosophy of Hobbes, the same is the conclusion of the thorough-paced Monist. Monism escapes from the argument drawn from contingent to necessary being, by alleging that all Being (or rather Becoming, *γένεσις*, not *οὐσία*) is alike contingent and alike necessary: that beyond the actual passing thoughts of a Something that is all things, nothing whatever is, or can be, or could have been. At this rate, *possible* and *contingent* follow in the wake of *probable*. To a mind comprehensive of all fact, nothing is *probable*: everything either will be or it will not. Similarly, says the Monist, *possible* only means our inability to predict that a thing will not be. *Contingent* is an expression born of our illusory belief that what has happened might not have happened. To the

absolutely perfect mind, unto which the mind of the Monist is the nearest approximation, there is no contingency. The plain man thinks that if he had been more careful, he would not have missed his stroke at golf, and that he might have been more careful : but the Monist knows better, the care that he actually took was all the care that the circumstances allowed of. The Monist has sorrows and disappointments, but no repinings, no remorse : he is never angry with himself, nor, it is to be hoped, with servant or subordinate either. Everything that happens is just the best that could happen, and the worst also. All real philosophy is the philosophy of actuality : the ideal order is the region of illusion. But I am running on into dithyrambs : what say you to all this ?

Sosias. Simply I say that it is a metaphysic at variance with the facts of psychology.

Eumenes. I do not quite apprehend your meaning.

Sosias. I mean that such a view of Reality takes no account of the thoughts and beliefs about Reality which all mankind naturally have. Suppose I have given my confidence to a man who has betrayed me, and in so trusting him I neglected the advice of another person who warned me against him, I say, as anyone would say in such a case, "I might have been more prudent." "No you might not," the Monist chimes in, "you showed all the prudence possible to you under your circumstances : nothing was possible to you but what you actually did." One may use such language "by way of maintaining a paradox," as

Aristotle says (*θέσειν διαφυλάττων*, Eth. Nic. i. 5), but at heart no man thinks so. Monist metaphysic, instead of explaining the common thought of humanity, remakes, reverses, and transforms under pretence of correcting it. The Monist metaphysician declares that man ought not to think as psychology reports that he does think. Human thought, then, is wide of reality : the laws of being, the object of metaphysics, vary from the laws of thought, the object of psychology. I say, on the contrary that the two are and must be in correspondence, if we are to have any philosophy at all. The philosopher is impossible, if the plain man does not think in the main correctly ; for the philosopher is only the plain man straightened out.

§ 3. PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD FROM THE IDEAL ORDER OF THINGS.

Sosias. *Sunt infinita intelligibilia : ergo existit unum summe intelligibile seipsum summe intelligens : ergo existit Deus.*

Eumenes. Translate and explain.

Sosias. "There are endless objects of understanding : therefore there exists one Sovereign Object of understanding, sovereignly understanding itself ; therefore there exists a God." This argument was laid down by Father Joseph Bayma, S.J., when I had the benefit of his lectures in 1867-8. We, his hearers, rose in a body against the argument ; and he defended it

with vigour, quitting the scene of strife with the last word, *est bonum argumentum*. What I questioned then, now that I am older and ought to be wiser, I hold and embrace firmly. Let us be liberal enough to allow that the existence of God is provable, *πὸ λυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*, in *sundry and divers ways* (Heb. i. 1). Not all minds are equally taken with the same proof. To a Platonist faculty of thought there is no better proof than this, drawn from the ideal order. Any Platonist, ought, I think, to accept this argument. An object of understanding (*intelligibile*) is an object represented by a universal idea. Now a universal idea, though it may fix on a single object, a concrete particular thing, never confines itself to any particular thing. Whatever it views, it universalises, taking that particular thing, or some aspect or aspects of that particular thing, for a type of endless other like things that might be. Thus the idea comes to be independent of the existence of the particular. It was prompted by some sensory experience of the particular ; but, once got, it continues, though that particular, or indeed all particulars, perish. In other words, essence, as an object of intelligence, stands apart from existence.

Eumenes. But surely non-existent essences are nothing.

Sosias. No, they exist in mind.

Eumenes. As logical entities, *entia rationis*.

Sosias. As *entia rationis cum fundamento in re*, logical entities founded on actual reality.

Eumenes. You mean the actual reality of creatures existing in the world.

Sosias. Yes that, but more than that. Though the world were to perish, all but one human mind, still those logical entities, those universal ideas, would have foundation outside that mind; and might be arranged together to form a science having objective value, not "the baseless fragment of a vision." Suppose all geometers annihilated, all except Archimedes, and all the material world to boot, so that Archimedes remained only as a spirit, still geometry would remain in his mind as a science of objective truth, just as much a science of objective truth as it is now. You would not undo geometry by destroying the material universe: no, nor chemistry either: chemistry would endure as an hypothetical science, as all science is hypothetical,—hypothetical of existence, but categorical of essence: *if* there were any bromine, iodine, or potassium, they would behave in this way and that. Science is of essences, history of existences. Art too is of essences, conceptions, whether realised or not: I mean art as a thing of intellect, distinct from manual skill. For one design that the architect, painter, or engineer, succeeds in leading forth into the region of sensible reality, there have passed through his mind a hundred others, which remain merely ideal, and yet are not simply subjective, but conversant with truth.

Eumenes. To hear you, one would think you were a Platonist and believed in Platonic Ideas.

Sosias. I do believe in Platonic Ideas, as did St. Augustine, and under some reservation, St. Thomas himself. Hear him: "Augustine says that the plans or types of things exist severally in the Divine Mind. And herein also is defensible in some sort the opinion of Plato, who supposes Ideas, according to which all beings in the material world are formed" (*C.G.* i. 54). Only it is a doctrine difficult to formulate, continually misstated, and, under misstatement, condemnable. The Ideas do not dwell by themselves, away from all mind. They do not exist in multitude, as sensible things do. They are essences, not existences, still not nonentities, not mere fancies. Essence is prior to existence,—I mean to the existence of created things. Such things must be possible, and possible on certain definite lines, ere ever they could be made. There must be some sort of mould ready to receive being, or no being could come to be. Not of course that this 'mould' is anything actually existent as such: no one now believes in the actuality of abstract essences as such: and yet those essences are not mere mental figments, or else all science is vain, which is ever ascending to them; vain is all poetry and all art, which is ever seeking to express them.¹

Eumenes. I remember your telling me that the doctrine of Platonic Ideas would be much clearer

¹ This is drawn out in an *Essay towards the theory of an Ideal or Intelligible World*, by John Norris, A.M., London, 1701 (Bodleian Library, SL. 148 Th.).

for the addition of a letter, if for *Ideas* we wrote *Ideals*.

Sosias. That reminds me of another saying that "Positivism has no Ideal." It is simply the record of changes which it considers the human mind to have gone through in the course of ages. Its one principle is, "You must change with the times." Its one delight is in the Uniformities of Nature. Its one canon of truth is sensible experience. Its one philosophy is Physical Science. It hates the Ideal Order, and disbelieves in what it hates. And having no Ideal, very logically and consequently it has no God. For God is the realisation of the Ideal, the apex in which Ideal and Actual meet : God is the eminent fulfilment of all possibility. The Platonic Ideas, the *intelligibilia* of St. Thomas, are glimmerings of God. God is the Reality at the back of them, a reality faintly reflected in the actual existences of this world, which are the first objects of our cognition. We rise from actualities to ideals, and ideals have their realisation, their full meaning and being, in God. There are endless ideals : therefore there exists one supreme Ideal adequately cognisant of Itself ; and that is God. Such is Father Bayma's thesis and mine.

Eumenes. Why do you speak of your Ideal as cognisant of itself?

Sosias. I am glad you ask me. You will find the answer in St. Thomas (*C.G.* i. 44, n. 7). St. Thomas there says: "The forms that exist in particular things are imperfect, for the very reason that they

do exist in particular, and not in the universality of their idea, or the fulness of their ideal being." Thus of no individual human being can it be said that his beauty is up to the standard, form, idea, or ideal of perfect beauty. The type is perfect, but is never perfectly realised in the individual of this visible world. Even an angel at best fulfils some particular type of excellence, not all excellence. An Ideal cannot dwell apart: it must be (*a*) realised in some substance, of which it is the formal perfection; (*b*) appreciated in some mind. Here then is our thesis, that ideals of perfection cannot be isolated entities, loose, unconnected, not united in subordination to any supreme Ideal: further, that the Supreme Ideal must be a subsistent Mind, finding all perfection in its own substance, and adequately appreciating what it finds in itself.

This, however, is not an argument for a Philistine, it may fail to bring down a Goliath: not even all true Israelites have appreciated it. But, to my mind, the rejection of it would be a blow to Theism. Recognise the ideal order of essences and possibilities, and so you ascend to the cognition of one Supreme authentic Mind where all truth is united, and that is God.

Eumenes. I like your argument, I think there is stuff in it, but, as you say, it is an argument hard to dress up in logical form; and consequently stands in danger of being rejected, as a good cause is sometimes lost in a law-court for a technical flaw. I

should like to go back upon a side-issue. You quoted with approval a saying that Positivism lacks an ideal. But you meet with Positivists full of plans for reforming the world, in education for example ; and Comte had his own ideals of politics and religion.

Sosias. No doubt, but Positivists do many things inconsistent with their Positivism, as fatalists do things inconsistent with fatalism. I do not know why Comte should have been so solicitous to improve the world, and that by such extraordinary methods. One would have thought that, having arrived at the Positive stage, we had but to follow the march of events, and go further whither we shall go. But I have found by experience how much a man is better than his books, how much more rational he is to talk to than they are to read. You like the man, where you have not liked the book : for a book can never be more than a blurred image of the mind and soul of the writer. And besides, books are man's creatures, but man is God's creature, nearer to God than they are.

Eumenes. A consideration to make readers charitable, and to console authors.

NOTE.—The following note is from *Of God and His Creatures*, p. 33.—“The ‘forms’ here spoken of (not the human soul) are entities denoted by abstract names, as beauty, dexterity, squareness. They exist only in particular substances, and in each case imperfectly according to the imperfections of that in which they exist. Thus beauty is marred by the age, bodily

infirmities, and accidents of any beautiful living being. No living being on earth is ideally beautiful. Is then every ideal 'form' something that practically cannot be? St. Thomas thinks not. Recognising that the ideal cannot be but in a mind, he thereupon posits ideals which are themselves minds,—self-conscious ideals, and these are the angels. The Platonic ideas, or ideals, are thus brought into *rerum natura* as angels, one angel being the self-conscious idea of one quality. Thus he says in II, 93: 'Separate substances (i.e. angels) are certain essences existing by themselves (*quidditates subsistentes.*)' This essence, existing by itself, and conscious of itself,—existing therefore in a mind, its own mind, as all ideal being needs to exist in a mind,—this ideal essence, I say, is not limited, as forms are limited in the material universe, by being reduced to the particular. An angel, says St. Thomas (*Contra Gent.* ii. 93) is not reduced to the particular as one individual of many in a species: each angel is a species by himself, a living, conscious specific essence, sole of its kind. Thus among angels there are particular species, but not particular individuals of a species: this or that species is this or that individual, containing an ample measure, though not a divine fulness, of the specific essence. St. Thomas does not say that specific forms necessarily exist by themselves: he does not teach the necessary existence of angels: all he argues is that, if these forms exist by themselves at all (*si sint subsistentes*) they must be self-conscious and intelligent

beings. The utmost that he can be said to contend is that angels are a fitting complement of the universe (II, 91). All that is absolutely necessary is the existence of a Supreme Being, who virtually contains in Himself all perfections which are represented in our minds by various abstract forms ; a Being who is the Actuality of all ideal perfection.

The argument then is,—imperfect forms are apparent everywhere in the material creation. Imperfect forms must come of perfect forms : perfect forms are ideal forms : ideal forms can exist nowhere but in the mind : if these ideal forms exist anywhere by themselves, they must themselves be minds conscious of what they are : such self-conscious ideals are the angels ; anyhow, whether existing by themselves or not, ideals must be represented in one Perfect Mind : God therefore is Mind. The argument is Platonic, or rather, Neoplatonist, as the making of the ideals into angels shows. It is rather a probable intuition than an argument. As an argument, it has many difficulties. St. Thomas cannot have meant to say that any angel was living perfect beauty, or living perfect wisdom, for then it would be God ; but perhaps we might have a living perfect fragrance, or a living perfect agility ; and we may suppose that only these minor perfections, which do not carry all other perfections with them, are personified in the angels, and that only in an imperfect way.

Omitting the theory of angels, we may formulate the matter finally thus. The ideal must be realised

somewhere. It is realisable only in Mind. We must arrive ultimately at one Mind that realises the whole ideal order. That one grand Realiser and Realisation of all ideals is the Mind of God."

§ 4. ST. ANSELM'S PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD
(C.G. i. 10, 11).

Sosias. St. Anselm considers that the concept which we form of God, as a Being greater than whom none can be conceived, is enough to prove God's existence. Let $A =$ a Being, greater than whom none is conceivable, but who nevertheless is conceived not to exist. Thus, after all, $A = 0$. Let $A' =$ a Being, greater than whom none is conceivable, and who further is conceived to exist. Thus $A' = \infty$. Both equations, observe, hold in the conceptual order. It is clear that in the said conceptual order A' is a greater Being than A , for existence is a primary element of greatness. It is clear again that the concept A is self-contradictory, for the concept of non-existence is a taking off of conceivable greatness. Therefore to think of God as all-perfect is to think of Him as existing. The proposition, "the all-perfect One is not," is a contradiction in terms. Therefore the all-perfect is, God is.

Eumenes. But the *number of fools is infinite* (Eccles. i. 15), and *the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God* (Ps. xiii. 1). Multitudes, in fact, seem to have found no difficulty in conceiving the non-existence of God.

Sosias. Because men continually fail to appreciate the content of their own conceptions, which is the reason why metaphysicians and mathematicians are so rare.

Eumenes. I will remodel your equation. Let $A = a$ Being, conceived as one who would be the greatest of all conceivable, if He existed at all, but who is further conceived not to exist. Then $A' = a$ Being, conceived as one who would be the greatest of all conceivable, if He existed, and who is further conceived to exist.

Sosias. Well, is A or A' the higher conception?

Eumenes. In essence, the conception of A and A' is the same: A' is only higher inasmuch as it adds to essence the note of existence.

Sosias. That distinction will not serve you *in divinis*, for in God, if God there be, essence and existence must be absolutely one (*C.G.* i. 22), not only actually but also conceptually. Existence enters into the essential concept of God. To conceive of God as non-existent is to have no conception of God at all. Even to prescind from His existence is to prescind from the essential notion of what He is. The notion of God is the notion of a perfect Being who cannot but be. It seems absurd to say that such a Being can possibly not exist.

Eumenes. Absurd *in se*, yes, but not *quoad nos*, as St. Thomas speaks. But the argument is like an eel: now you think that you have it in a conclusive form, and it slips away: now you think you have killed it,

and lo it lives again. The eel has wriggled for centuries, and will go on wriggling, for all the handling of Descartes and Leibnitz, Kant, and you and me. But I have always felt it a sad thing this disagreement of St. Thomas with St. Anselm.

Sosias. It is the radical disagreement of Aristotelian with Platonist, exemplified in Doctors of the Church. But St. Thomas does sometimes seem to me to lapse into the Anselmic argument unawares. In several places (*C.G.* i. 28, arg. 5 in the Latin; ii. 15, n. 2; iii. 91) he uses what is called "the argument from degrees at being." It is a Platonic argument, allied to the doctrine of Ideas. It supposes that in every kind there is some chief of that kind, possessing the attributes of the kind in the highest degree, and imparting them to the rest. Now I know *being* is not a *kind*; still it might seem that this doctrine ought to be applied to *being*. So applying it, you come to *aliquid quod est maxime ens*, some 'Being in chief,' whose existence must be involved in there existing any being at all.

Eumenes. That is very curious; I will think about it, whether it makes for Anselm.

Socias. To return. A friend of mine, a poet and philosopher, has succeeded in breathing into the Anselmic argument a new life. Let me show you *Poems of the Seen and the Unseen*, by C. W. Herbert (Oxford, 1905), pp. 84-89, 102-107. Mr. Herbert writes:

Either God is, by dread necessity,
Or 'tis impossible that God should be.

On which he has this note : “ Either God necessarily exists, or the Existence, in reality, of a Self-Subsistent Being is absolutely impossible. In other words, the concept of God either must have, or it cannot absolutely have a Real Object. Is not the second alternative of this logical disjunction ignored in St. Anselm’s ontological argument? ” Re-stated on these terms, the major premise of the argument comes to this : “ Either a Being greater than whom none is conceivable, necessarily exists, or any such Being is necessarily non-existent, an intrinsic impossibility, the very notion of such a Being involving a contradiction in terms.”

Eumenes. I think, every one ought to agree to that. If God is possible, He is existent. A contingent God, who possibly might not have been, is an absurdity. To give God a place in the ideal order is to give Him place in the actual order. To say that He is conceivable and possible, is to affirm His existence. To deny His actuality is to deny His intrinsic conceivability. We must either confess His existence, or rule Him out of possibility altogether. Either He is, or He absolutely cannot be. Necessarily to be, or necessarily not to be,—that is the alternative for God. Consequently, if God is possible, He exists. I make no doubt of that.

Sosias. Neither do I. We will proceed on that assumption. If you allow the concept of God to be valid, as a mathematical concept, say of an asymptote, is valid, you must allow that there is a Being in actual

existence, answering to the concept. But how prove that the concept is valid, or in other words, that there is nothing impossible contained in it, no absurdity, no self-contradiction? Mr. Herbert has recourse to a general proposition in proof:

Of being representative in mind ;
 What is conceivable may therefore be.
 Thought mirrors being.

He thinks to find a proof of this in geometry. He quotes a saying, traditionally ascribed to Plato,

God doth eternally geometrise.¹

The concepts of geometry, he says, we find by experience realised in the material universe, *point* centre of force; *line* of action of forces; *elliptical* orbit of planets, and the like. And as mathematical concepts are valid, and represent what well may be,—nay what continually is,—so are other concepts valid, that is, have objectivity.

Eumenes. After our last argument in proof of the existence of God from facts of the ideal order, we shall not be the men to quarrel with Mr. Herbert's conclusion.

Sosias. No, and yet I have my doubt as to the application of his principle here. Geometrical concepts we do comprehend and grasp thoroughly, so far

¹ "The saying that God eternally geometrises is not found clearly in any of his (Plato's) books, but the ascription of it to him is sufficiently credible, and the saying has a Platonic ring." Plutarch, *Quaestiones Convivales*, viii. 2.

as we can comprehend anything: they make the clearest category of our knowledge. They are simple, abstract, their content is thin, and our mind folds itself round them in their entirety. There is no mystery about points, straight lines, circles,—none at least in the view of the geometer. But ascend from pure geometry to the next higher stratum of science, mechanics: do you understand all about weight, mass, momentum, energy, velocity, motion, space, time?

Eumenes. I think my acquaintance much out in their views of some of these things: that is, I think that they do not understand them; and much, I confess, I do not understand myself.

Sosias. A fourth dimension is taken to be mathematically conceivable; can you tell me whether it is objectively possible?

Eumenes. Partly on theological grounds, I am inclined to believe in it myself: but I should wish to speak modestly on the subject, as my mathematics do not carry me far. And particularly not into the mysteries of non-Euclidean geometry, 'groups,' and 'transformations,' by which the very foundations of mathematics now seem jeopardised.

Sosias. Here then comes my difficulty. Name to me a 'Being than whom none greater is conceivable, self-existent, necessary, all-perfect,'—I answer: Yes, I have the concept of such a Being, but do I grasp it thoroughly? do I quite know what I am saying when I name such a Being and call Him God?

Eumenes. Your conception is clear so far as it goes,—clear, but inadequate.

Sosias. Something like the first crescent of the new moon, as compared with the full disc that will be visible in a fortnight, eh?

Eumenes. Yes, we may take that comparison.

Sosias. But, had I not experience to the contrary, I should not know that that disc ever would be full. When I see the new moon, not seeing the dark portion of the moon's surface, I cannot tell how it is rounded off: perhaps the curve will give place to a straight perpendicular line, and I shall have the vision of something like a half-orange. In like manner, though, so far as I see, there is no contradiction in the concept of a Being ideally great and perfect, yet the further development of that concept, could I but develop it further, might reveal the presence of a contradiction. It is as a mathematical series that goes on regularly to n terms, but I do not know its law; and the $(n + 1)$ th term may break the series. Or take the case of Perpetual Motion. Many ingenious inventors have conceived to their own satisfaction the idea of a machine that would work perpetually without assistance from without. A more perfect apprehension of mechanical motion reveals an absurdity in that idea. What if we came to apprehend more perfectly all that is involved in an all-perfect Being? Some who have gone furthest in philosophy have pronounced such a Being impossible and self-contradictory. Or they have elaborated an Absolute, which

to other men is an absurdity. Look at St. Thomas, and his marvellous assertions touching the absolute simplicity and immutability of God : how God is His own essence, and His own act of understanding (*C.G.* i. 21, 45), how His own essence is the type of all multitudinous possible objects, which He knows simply by knowing Himself (*C.G.* i. 53-55), how He further knows individual existing things (*C.G.* i. 65), how He has created of free choice (*C.G.* ii. 23), and is unchanged by His will to create, and has no 'real relation' with His creatures (*C.G.* ii. 12, 13). I cannot put my finger on any definite impossibility in all this, but how can I call that possible which so much passes my understanding? God is infinite. Who shall take measure of infinity? Who shall say, 'I have travelled all round it, and find it all quite rational'? Does not the infinite baffle our reason? Is not the rational, to our minds, identified with the limited, τὸ πεπερασμένον, as the ancient Greeks laid down, those acute minds, who took the infinite, τὸ ἄπειρον, for something evil and unintelligible, an abyss for man to avoid?

Eumenes. Sosias, had you gone to the bar, you should have cross-examined the other party's witnesses, but never your own. You are ever better at destructive argument than at construction.

Sosias. My ignorance cries louder than my knowledge, I suppose. But now you have heard my attack, listen to my defence, or rather not to my defence, for I will call in my lamented friend,

Mr. Herbert, to my succour.¹ These are his verses :

One, who adopts the dread alternative
 Of logic, *Nought is Deity*, should recall :
 He holds it for impossible to give
 A Substance to the concept shared by all,—
 Which cannot under category fall
 Of self-conflicting notions. For a thought,
 Involving elements in mutual
 Repugnance,—that is logically nought,—
 Affirmeth being, and denies the same ;
 Which, of all concepts that a mind can frame,
 To this august idea doth least apply.
 How should the thought of an All-Perfect One,
 Whose Plenitude excludes negation
 Of being, contradictories imply ?

Two ideas are contradictory of one another by the negations, or affirmed limitations, which they severally imply, e.g. *athletic* and *senile*, *virtuous* and *dissolute*. But the concept of God is that of Being, Being, Being, mere pure Being ; and Being, as such, cannot contradict Being. Only limited beings are incompatible one with another. This is a positive reason for believing that in the infinite greatness which we attribute to the Supreme Being there are involved no contradictory elements. It is no mere conjecture or pious hope. We do not need to travel round infinity to draw this conclusion. As for τὸ ἄπειρον, disliked of Greeks, I may add : ἄπειρον was not the

¹ Charles Witham Herbert, M.A. Cantab., died in the spring of 1907. R.I.P.

‘infinite,’ but the ‘vague and indefinite,’ just what God is not. The Infinite is the most definite of beings, because it is the most exclusive. It takes in nothing but the best and highest.

Eumenes. Do you really think there are no difficulties in the argument for the existence of God?

Sosias. There must be difficulties in all the approaches of human understanding towards such a Being. But let us be philosophical enough to walk round to the other side, and consider the difficulties of the position of the non-existence of God. The first consequence involved is the futility of Christianity: now a Christian has strong evidence, evidence at once general and personal, that Christianity is not futile: all that evidence militates against an exchange of gold for copper.

Eumenes. Are there not atheists who say that Christianity is a beautiful illusion, and for its beauty, not for its truth, deserves to be maintained wherever its maintenance is possible.

Sosias. A very partial view. Will the atheist say that every article of the Christian creed is beautiful, the doctrine of the eternity of hell-fire, for example? Or will he pick out some articles, which he considers beautiful, and cut away the rest? Then it is no longer Christianity that he wishes to be maintained, but an æsthetic pet of his own, a heresy, an illusion. In the name of common honesty, how will he introduce it to the world? As the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Or will he warrant its beauty

only? What is thought of the 'beauty' of a building, confessedly ill-built and threatening ruin? That it is not beauty at all, but meretricious gaudiness, e.g. Beckwith's Fonthill Abbey. The lines of beauty in a good building are likewise lines of strength: ornament and construction there go hand in hand. And so it is with Catholic Christianity. It is beautiful in deep assurance of stable harmonious truth. The Church is more concerned with truth than beauty, knowing that upon the former the latter follows. She will seem at times sternly regardless of beauty. Let us stand up for 'Catholic truth'; 'Catholic beauty' will not be wanting.

Eumenes. But in the absence of all permanent and objective truth might it not be well to perpetuate a delusion, so long as the delusion was certified by experience as pleasing and beneficial? And this is what atheism seems ultimately to come to in philosophy, the negation of objective truth. If God is not the measure of all things, then man's judgment, guided by man's convenience, must be the measure. Then man might make a God for himself, according to the French saying: "If there were no God, it would be necessary for man to create one."

Sosias. *Does God need your lying?* Job (xiii. 7) asked his friends. If atheism creates a void that needs to be filled by a lie, that is no justification of the lie, but it is an argument against the truth of atheism.

Eumenes. I believe in God; but when I try to prove His existence, proof after proof breaks down;

and I am almost reduced to this, that, still believing in God, I disbelieve all the proofs.

Sosias. Pray give some attention at your leisure to the proof I am now insisting upon,—the chaos in philosophy that ensues upon the negation of God. On such a high theme as the divine existence, there is difficulty to encounter, whichever side you embrace. But if there are arduous heights in theism, atheism remains a Serbonian bog. Then you have to consider that the proof of the existence of God is what is called a ‘cumulative proof.’ It is not all one single shaft, but a clustered column. Besides the argument from Motion, or from Change, there is the argument from Design : besides Design, there is the Ideal Order of Truth : besides Ideals, there is Conscience ; and besides Conscience, there is the Catholic Church. Every thinking theist, I believe, has his own proof of the existence of God ; some from the world outside, some from the world within ; some from existences, others from essences ; some from philosophy, others from history, others from their own religious experiences : but all the proofs combine and work together. Their added weight is immense. You can always cavil and gainsay : but the wise man seeks, not to air his cleverness, but to light on the truth which it concerns him to know. The caviller is not far removed from the fool ; and *the fool said in his heart, There is no God* (Ps. xiii. 1).

Eumenes. How about the agnostic, who dares not pronounce, who neither says that there is nor that there is not ?

Sosias. There are two agnostics, the agnostic who does not know, and the agnostic who does not care. The former I compassionate and respect : but I hold that if only he continues to care, he will find out something of God before he dies. One point to suggest to him is, whether his method of inquiry be not wrong. God is not found as a theorem in mathematics is found, or a new star, or a new salt in chemistry. When looking for God, we are looking for a Master ; and such a Master is not approachable except in some guise of reverence and humility. There is a text, *Except ye become as little children* (Matt. xviii. 3).

Eumenes. And what of the agnostic who does not care ?

Sosias. Him I take to be more of a fool than the downright atheist. The ostrich of the fable, burying its head in the sand, not to escape but to ignore its pursuers, is the type of this *pococurante* agnostic. Of this character of man I find that I have written elsewhere : (He) “ simply declares religion to be out of the sphere of practical life,—to be an amusement and pastime, a pageant, like a Jubilee Procession, that you may see or not see as you will, without any difference to your vital interests,—or a study, like Attic Greek, or high mathematics, or metaphysics, three subjects that no one can be blamed for being ignorant of, or loses any tangible good by neglecting them. Therefore, whether we have a Creator and Lord, or owe our existence to a fortuitous environ-

ment ; whether there is a Heaven and a Hell, or either, or neither ; whether the spirits of the men who peopled this globe a hundred years ago are anything now or nothing ; whether the quality of our future existence, if such is to be, does or does not depend on our service of God in this life,—all these contingencies are of no practical interest to humanity, are mere food for the philosophic dreamer and the idle recluse. It is difficult to conceive how any thinking man can take such a view of religion” (*The Lord My Light*, p. 54). “These articles of the creed are not mere topics of discussion, nice things to argue about, and dandle in your arms, and pet, and fling down again : they are life or death to the soul that accepts or rejects them” (*Oxford and Cambridge Conferences*, 1900, 1901, p. 158). Most especially is this true of the first article, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.”

To return to St. Anselm. In our hands the Anselmic proof has come to this : If God comes into the ideal order (the order of essence) at all, He must be also in the actual (the order of existence) : He must be in both orders or be in neither. In other words, if the concept of Deity is a rational concept, there is a God.

§ 5. A LETTER FROM SOSIAS.

Sosias Eumeni suo Salutem.

You ask me how it is that if the existence of God our Creator can be proved to a certainty, so many

intellectual men remain unconvinced. I reply that by aid of one proof or another, sundry proofs appealing to sundry minds, most intellectual men do arrive at some conviction of the being of God, however they may differ as to His nature. You have heard what Jowett said, walking in the quadrangle of Balliol with a newly arrived freshman, who, thinking to please the Master, told him that he had searched and found no God anywhere: "Well, Mr. X, unless you have found a God by half-past four this afternoon, you leave this College." Jowett was right: God can be found; and by most men, with greater or less success, He is actually found. Still, you say, there is a considerable residue, and in our day an increasing residue, of men who do not find Him. For this there are many reasons. One reason, often alleged, and, doubtless, rightly alleged in many cases, is some moral obliquity, pride, sensuality, or the like, perverting the judgment. But I spare you that well-worn topic. I want to set before you a reason, assigned by our Saviour Himself. Take out your New Testament, and read St. John vi. 41-45, 64, 65. You will say, this *drawing*, this *gift* of the Father, refers to the actual grace which is requisite to faith, but that we are not now discussing faith in revelation, we are discussing the natural certitude about God attainable by reason. Quite so, but He who rejects God's call to faith is apt to be scornful of reason also: he who will not be a Christian, when he might have been, will make a very feeble-kneed Deist. But I am anxious

to keep the argument out of the region of the supernatural, and remain, as a philosopher should, *in puris naturalibus*. Even in the natural order, then, so good theologians aver, there is such a thing as "natural grace." Even in the natural order, it is no apparent impossibility for God Himself to speak direct to the human soul, and not leave it to be impressed solely by contact with creatures. St. Thomas, you will remember, makes direct communications from God a necessity for the Angels to have any knowledge at all of the facts of creation : yet surely such knowledge naturally befits the angel. So then there are natural locutions of God to angels : so also to men (*Summa*, 1^a, q. 55, art. 2). In the present supernatural order, actual grace is necessary for man to observe the natural law uniformly and thoroughly : so the Council of Trent rules, Sess. vi., canon 22 ; and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 418), canon 5. And St. Paul speaks of the perfect observance of the law as *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh* (Rom. viii. 3). But in all sound theology it must be assumed that man in the state of pure nature would not be stronger to observe the law of rectitude than man is now. Locutions from God, or 'natural graces' (they are natural merely, and not supernatural, because they do not lead up to any beatific vision, or face-to-face contemplation of God in heaven), are, then, necessary for man to exist as a moral being even in the state of pure nature : they are needs of man as man. If the will needs these natural graces,

these divine locutions, the intellect needs them also ; the intellect, to know its Master, the will, to serve Him. Thus in any case it *is not a mere matter of proofs*, when there is question of man arriving at and holding fast to the philosophic cognition of God. When proofs have led the enquirer a certain way, he comes within the sphere of divine locutions. These locutions do not instruct him, they are not revelations, but they press upon the mind the arguments which reason has already found for believing in God. Some men listen to God and believe ; others disobey those inner divine voices, and, turning their backs upon Him who has spoken to them, they fall to quarrelling with arguments. They cavil at the process of Reason proving a God, because they stop the ears of their intelligence to the Voice, speaking within, which bids them accept the demonstration. Read St. John again, xii, 37-48 ; also St. Paul, Acts xxviii. 24-27 ; and apply those texts, first, to the actual world, of which they are spoken, then to the world of philosophers and speculative divines, and to the divine locutions which would be given even in the state of pure nature. Some men listen to the call of God, and find Him : the reason why others miss Him is because they do not listen to His call.

Your faithful old friend,
SOSIAS.

STUDY III.

AVERROES.

C.G. ii. cc. 59, 60, 61, 69, 73, 75.

THE 'Gentiles,' against whom the *Summa contra Gentiles* is directed, are the Arabian commentators on Aristotle,—to wit, Avicenna, Averroes, and their followers. When St. Thomas lectured in the University of Paris, these commentators commanded a considerable following there, he particularly who was named *par excellence* 'the Commentator,' the illustrious Ibn Roschd, 1120-1198, Latinised as Averroes.

Averroes was an orthodox Mohammedan. His office of court-physician to a Mohammedan prince held him fast to that orthodoxy. Now Mohammedanism, like the Judaism on which it is founded, abhors pantheism. Averroes therefore shrank from saying that the Universal Intellect, in which he makes all men share, is God. Its relation to God, whether as creature or otherwise, he nowhere determines. You may read pantheism into Averroism, but Averroes cannot fairly be called a pantheist. At least he was not more of a pantheist than his master Aristotle.

The objection of the Christian Church to Averroes turns not immediately upon his theology, but upon his psychology. The first lesson taught to the Christian child is this: 'You have got a soul to save.' That soul has to be saved from an overwhelming evil, and brought to an immense good, the evil threatened and the good promised both hanging over that same soul at its departure from the body. Christianity, then, teaches the immortality, or survival after death, of each individual human soul. But only an intellectual soul can survive death. A mere sentient soul, every operation of which is a bodily function, must become inoperative, and as inoperative also non-existent, at death. Now according to Averroes there is no such thing as an individual intellectual soul. There are individual souls certainly, but their highest operation is merely sensory, the operation of the 'passive intellect,' or *vis cogitativa*, which under the name of *vis aestimativa* is found also in the lower animals (*C.G.* ii. 60).¹ And the passive intellect perishes in death. Therefore, in this account, nothing is left of John, James, Richard, and Mary, whose tombstones you see in the churchyard, except their poor mouldering remains, and the Universal Intellect in which they once participated, but in which they have now no further share. Clearly, then, there is no hell to dread, and no heaven to anticipate,

¹ When a dog goes mad, his senses remain perfect. It is the *vis aestimativa*, a faculty in him beyond sense, yet short of reason, that has gone wrong.

for the living descendants of John, Richard, and James. The whole notion of saving your soul is set aside.

The hypothesis of the Universal Intellect is rejected by the theologian as inconsistent with the Christian faith; by the philosopher, as unproved, scarcely intelligible, and open to the many grave objections which St. Thomas raises against it. It may be dismissed as an error. But the errors of great minds are guesses at great truths, and usually hit some portion of the truth at which they aim. The truth intended by Averroes is this, that, without God, man's understanding sees nothing. St. Thomas says (*C.G.* iii. 89), "God is cause of all action, and works in every agent: therefore He is cause of the motions of the will:" to which argument the whole chapter is devoted. The argument applies equally well to the motions of the understanding. How God is cause of the motions of the will is indeed a great question: for not only divine causality has to be asserted, but likewise human liberty. Thomist and Molinist have flung themselves in fierce contention upon this moot point, and still the issue lies open. Not less debatable is the manner of God's co-operation in human cognition, a favourite question with St. Augustine, not much noticed by St. Thomas. He notices it (*C.G.* iii. 47) only to deprecate and explain away that interpretation of St. Augustine,—favoured last century by the Ontologists,—according to which the Saint is made to say that we somehow see the

essence of God even in this life, and thereby know all that we do know.¹

That God causes our every act of understanding, inasmuch as He is Universal Cause and nothing happens without His causation, is true ; but the truth does not take us very far. God is in like manner cause of every feeling, and of every process, organic and inorganic, throughout nature. We look to find some action of God in intelligence, which shall not be found elsewhere. God helps the beasts of the field to conceive and bring forth their young, and to taste the joys of their animal existence. But He does not *feel* with them : nor do they feel Him. On the other hand, He does in some sort *understand* with man, inasmuch as what is true for our mind is true likewise for God. And in a manner we understand God whenever we understand anything at all,—not certainly the essence of His Being, but the veils and trappings of that essence, to wit, the essential forms and relations of things, or what St. Thomas calls *intelligibilia* (*C.G.* i. 51-54). These ‘intelligibles’ are otherwise called ‘universals,’ for they are not tied down to any particular thing, or dependent for their truth and reality upon particular existence. Intellect always universalises, and all science is of the universal. We come to know universals through our

¹ The connexion of Ontologism with Averroism is a curious study. Curious also is the fact that Ontologism prevailed in the north of Italy, the stronghold of Averroism even to the close of the sixteenth century.

sensory knowledge of particulars. But once we reach the universal, we are independent of the continued existence of the particular from whence we drew our first cognition. Zoology, for example, takes scientific account of species now extinct. And here we touch upon the perpetual quarrel of Platonism with Aristotelianism. The Aristotelian teaches us that a universal,—human beauty for example,—has no existence except in particular men and women who happen to be beautiful. Accordingly it would appear that if ever the human race were reduced to a hundred ugly old men and squaws, human beauty would have perished. Perished surely it would have in the region of sensible actuality. But as an object of scientific study it would remain as fast and firm as ever. The ideal of the race survives the race itself. What is this ideal? Perhaps I cannot tell you: but that does not warrant you in telling me that the ideal is nowhere but in the concrete individual, and adding (what your argument obliges you to say, but what you do not yourself believe) that were all the concrete embodiments of it destroyed, the ideal would lose all objective reality whatsoever. The Idea, or Ideal, has no concrete individual existence out of the mind,—evidently not: how can the universal be individual and particular? All concrete existence is individual: but is all reality individual? There is the dispute. The reality of the Ideal is not to be set aside by proving that the Ideal has no individual reality. No such individual reality is claimed for it. What is

claimed for it is that it has a reality proper to the universal, and that it exists as a universal reality. Till the absurdity of "a reality proper to the universal" is demonstrated, Plato is not silenced, nor his school shut up.¹

What are Universal Ideas? An important question, surely; for all the work of science and philosophy, and indeed of ordinary thinking, is done with Universal Ideas. Subjectively, these ideas are concepts of our mind. But they must have an objective value: otherwise all our thinking is as

A clock from which the fingers have been taken,—

it means and marks just nothing at all. This objective value is found partly in the world of sense: otherwise there would be no science of sensible things: geology, for example, would not touch the earth. But universals have a further value beyond, so far as they furnish not mere history, but scientific theory and artistic conceptions. Platonism lies essentially in the recognition of that fact; and inasmuch as all philosophers, Aristotelians included, somehow do recognise it, all philosophers Platonise.

¹The attempt has been made to save the objective reality of Platonic Ideas, and even invest them with individual existence, by converting them into angels. See *C.G.* i. 44: ii. 98: iii. 41. A fascinating field of speculation rather than of demonstrable philosophy. See, too, the curious passage about the heavenly spheres being the instrument of spirit, influencing all sublunary forms (and thoughts?), *C.G.* iii. 24.

I venture to think that Universal Ideas, so far as they transcend sensible existing things, have for their object the thoughts of God Himself,—not, however, known as God, for we have no vision of Deity, such as Ontologists supposed.¹ If it be objected that God has not many thoughts, but one only thought, which is His own vision of Himself, we have our reply in St. Thomas: “The divine essence is the likeness of all things” (*C.G.* i. 53). Which he further explains: “The divine understanding can comprehend whatever is proper to each thing in its essence, by understanding wherein each thing imitates the divine essence, and wherein it falls short of the perfection proper to that essence” (*C.G.* i. 54, read the whole chapter). God’s thought is actually one, virtually manifold: we attain to it in its virtual multiplication. Whenever we reason, think, or use our understanding as a power above sense, we enter somehow into the thoughts of God, without, however, recognising Him as God. If God did not think with us, there would be no thought for us to enter into: we should be unable to think or understand at all. In this way, it seems, Averroes was right, so far as there is a Mind above the individual man, but for the concurrence of

¹ God is in some way the object of all created intelligence, not consciously, explicitly, formally, but dimly, implicitly, and ultimately. And in the like dim, implicit, and ultimate regard, God is the object of all created will. This fact of will St. Thomas sets forth with much emphasis, *C.G.* iii. 18, 20, 24, 25. St. Thomas follows Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, xi.

which Mind in his thought the individual mind would have no thinking power. And as Averroes, so far also Avicenna, inasmuch as he says that “whenever we actually understand, there flow into our potential intellect intellectual impressions from . . . an intelligence subsisting apart” (*C.G.* ii. 74).¹ We enter into the thoughts of God, but we enter in by many doors,—or, shall I say? by small crevices and minute apertures,—not by the King’s own way and private entrance, which is by His own intuition of Himself. Our knowledge begins with sensible creatures, our own selves included. Creatures are many; and from this manifold of sensible existences we ascend to a manifold of Ideas. We cannot do as God does, and behold all Ideas in one. At the same time our progress in science and philosophy consists, not in the mere multiplication of Ideas, but in their assimilation and co-ordination into one organic whole. The progress of our thought is a progress towards a concrete unity of thinking, which, however, man will never achieve in this mortal life. We can deal with thought, as Plato would say, only when we get it *κατακερματισμένον*, “changed into small coin.” With God, it is one great gold coin. And even we strive to get our small pieces laid in little heaps, and so change them into pieces of higher value. Such is

¹ I am far from defending the position of Avicenna impugned by St. Thomas in this chapter. But I say that, when otherwise laid down than as Ibn-Sina himself laid it down, the position may be converted into a great truth.

the collocation of kindred Ideas, the continual aim of Science.

I do not know enough of Thomasinus to strike up an alliance with him ; but somehow he and I have got on to similar ground. Thus he writes (*De Trinitate*, C 22, § 7) :—

How possibly can these truths and laws of first principles of logic, arithmetic, music, ethics, and other sciences, be immutable and eternal, unless they even belong to the Divine Substance, since out of God there is nothing eternal? . . . But how can that belong to the Divine Substance, which is so alien from the Divine Simplicity? . . . Certainly he will not disport himself beyond the limits of probability, who shall say that these truths are a sort of condescensions, and what we may call a ‘coming down’¹ of that eternal and immutable truth which shines forth in the Word, and thence streams down upon all intellectual and rational natures, accommodating itself to their several limited capacities. For thus perhaps it will come to be that, in flowing down to human minds and adapting itself to them, this truth abates something of the light of its own simplicity.²

¹ *Condescensiones et veluti temperamenta*: ‘economies,’ Newman would have called them.

² The idea of a certain ‘condescension,’ *συγκατάβασις* of the Word in view of creation was not strange to the ancient Fathers. See Newman, *Tracts Theological*, pp. 192-207, 224.

STUDY IV.

CONTINGENT AND NECESSARY.

C.G. i. 67 : i. 85 : iii. 72 : iii. 94.

Eumenes. I have often thought how it would have come as a surprise to St. Thomas to have *contingency* ruled out of philosophy, even as the *sublunary world* has been ruled out of science as a valueless conception. There is no use talking of the *contingent*, nor indeed of the *necessary* either : the antithesis of *contingent* and *necessary* must go, in a world where *actuality* is taken to be all that is and can be : there is no use saying 'this might not have been,' 'this must be,' when the one thing to be considered is the mighty *is*.

Sosias. You mean that Monism would have surprised St. Thomas.

Eumenes. Yes, and I have further wondered at the Thomists of our day, how they go about proving the existence of God as *ens a se* (self-existent being) from the existence of *ens contingens* (contingent being), forgetful that their chief antagonists, the most potent of atheists, because the strongest of pantheists, deny that there is any *contingent being*. A treatise on Natural Theology, suited to our day, should contain a long

Introduction to set aside Monism and prove that there is such a thing as *contingency*.

Sosias. I agree with you. To the Monist, the 'contingent' disappears except as a subjective form, an incident of our thought, like the 'uncertain,' the 'probable,' the 'fortuitous.' But without waiting for the Natural Theologian, suppose you and I fire a shell into the fortress of Monism,—not that we expect wholly to demolish that formidable structure, but just do something to molest its defenders, and hearten any future attacking party.

Eumenes. With all my heart.

Sosias. And first let us get an exact view of the enemy, and definitely determine what we mean by Monism. Monism (from *μόνος*, *alone*) lays it down that one Object *alone is*, or rather is eternally coming into and vanishing from being,—one sole, irresistible *Process of Change*. This Process forms all history, and is the sole matter of science. For purposes of human study, it is conveniently subdivided into mechanical, chemical, electrical, biological, political, moral, military, religious, and other processes: but these are only particular aspects of one and the same universal Process. Is it a mental or a material Process? Call it which you like: but rather than subordinate thought to matter we will call it a Mental Process,—a series of transient states of one great Consciousness, whereof men and the lower animals in their degree are for the term of their natural lives partakers. The Process is neither evil nor good,

moral nor immoral : it simply is universal, everlasting, all-embracing, irresistible. In it there is no room left for any Permanent Being, or Substance, no individual soul, no God (unless you choose to call the Process itself Divine), no human personality, no free will :—Have you had enough of Monism ?

Eumenes. Quite enough, though with such rant it would be possible to fill volumes.

Sosias. And volumes have been filled. And now to our attack upon what Plato calls “the men of the Flux” (οἱ ῥέοντες, *Theaetetus*, 181).

(A) Change always involves something permanent, a ‘constant’ remaining unchanged. Where the change is substantial, the accident remains. Where the change is accidental, the substance remains. Thus, when there is a change of bowler at a cricket-match, the substance, the man, is changed ; but the accident, the bowling, goes on. In the baking of a brick, the substance remains, accidents alter. Were nothing to remain, there would be, not change, but a series of annihilations and re-creations. But annihilation is unknown to science and philosophy ; and as for re-creations, saving Omnipotence (which the Monists are the last men to invoke), *ex nihilo nihil fit*, nothing can come of nothing.

(B) Change, as such, is unthinkable, except in antithesis to permanent being.

(C) The common reason of mankind recognises that, though sensible objects change, there is that in them which does not change,—such objects do not

change in the core, full amplitude, and innermost recesses of their being. There is that in the Great Pyramid which has been since the days of Khu-fa.

(D) The common reason of mankind recognises what is called 'personal identity.' Half a century ago, it was objected against Mill that a series of states of consciousness cannot be conscious of itself as a series. We ever ask, 'whose consciousness?'

(E) The common reason of mankind recognises 'moral reprobation,' which is groundless away from free will. The thing done may well be evil, but not the doer, if he could not help doing it.

(F) No body moving, yet motion.
No thing changing, still change.

Q. E. A.

STUDY V.

THE MYSTERY OF THE UNCHANGEABLE CREATOR.

NATURALLY, when we do not see how a thing can be, and see apparent reasons why it cannot be, we say that that thing is not, unless we have direct evidence that somehow it is, as in the case of Space, Duration, and Motion. Sometimes we have no direct evidence, only the revelation of Christ, handed down by His Church. In the former case we have *natural mystery*: in the latter, *supernatural*. The one is a warrant of the other. Mystery, merely as such, is not irrational. We have to admit that a thing may well be, though we cannot understand how it can be; that there are truths incommensurable with human intelligence; that Protagoras was wrong in his celebrated pronouncement, that "man is the measure of all things, of the being of things that are, of the non-existence of things that are not." A spirit that cannot brook mystery can never be Christian, but neither is it rational. Besides natural mystery, which we cannot refuse, there may be supernatural mystery, which we should accept, *if* there is competent authority to warrant it.

There are narratives in the book of Daniel, which

by themselves,—I mean, apart from their being in the Bible,—I should pronounce quite incredible. As it is, I accept them on the authority of the Church as the word of God. I take them for true in the sense in which God speaks them. In what sense God does speak them, I am at a loss to say. Should the Church ever interpret them to me, with God's grace I will accept the interpretation. Meanwhile those narratives are *mysteries*. The Old Testament generally is a mystery. Remember, a mystery is a thing which we cannot *explain*. Protagoras wanted to explain all things; so do *some* votaries of physical science, and many Biblical critics.

I read in *C.G.* ii. 9 : “In God, action and power are not distinct”; whereupon a Note : “But hence a difficulty : God necessarily has the power of creating : if His power be His action, it appears that the action of creating in Him is also necessary, and that He cannot but create.” This difficulty is met in the Schools by the distinction of two adverbs, *entitative* and *terminative*. Creative action is necessary *entitative*, or in point of being, in which point it is a Pure Act, even God Himself. But it is not necessary *terminative*, in point of its termination, or direction, to this or that creature, or indeed to any creature at all. This distinction states the difficulty, but does not solve it. The difficulty is precisely to see how there can be change of termination without change of act. The analogy of the sun, hardening mud and melting ice, fails, because the difference of effect there is

accounted for by the difference of material. But in raising creatures out of nothing, there is no difference of material, but at most a difference of potentiality. The question remains, why is *this* potentiality actuated and not *that*? Why is any actuated at all? How can God, having from all eternity the will to create, be *entitative* absolutely the same Being as though from eternity He had no such will? There being no difference in the Creator, how comes this huge difference about, this almost infinite distance which obtains between the universe existing and the universe remaining in a state of pure potentiality and actual nothingness.

Scotus in his *De rerum principio* has two interesting *theses* on this subject. They are : Q. 3, "that God is not changed by creation" ; Q., 4 "that creation is not a necessary act on God's part." He says : "The one act of willing [in God] is of such wide compass in respect of both opposites, . . . that by the same act of willing He wills you to exist and could will you not to exist. . . . By the same act of willing, unchanged, unvaried, unrenewed, He wills this to be and can will the opposite. . . . By the same act of willing, God wills contradictories, not to be together (*non simul esse*), because that is impossible, but He wills them together (*sed simul vult*). . . . In God, this willing and that not willing are only diverse respects of the same act to things (*velle hoc, nolle illud, diversi respectus ejusdem actus ad res* (Q. 3, art. 3, sect. 1)). . . . Hence if you ask why this has been done and not the

opposite, I answer : Because God has willed this and not the opposite, all the while that, by the same act of willing, absolutely the same really, He wills this and the opposite (*cum tamen eodem velle omnino realiter vult hoc et oppositum*) ; and this is greatly to be taken notice of" (Q. 4, art. 2, sect. 3).

This is orthodox theology ; and, assuming it to be correct, we see how it heightens our view of the Majesty of God. So exalted is God above the world and so independent of the same, that it makes not the slightest difference in His Being whether He wills to make a world or not. It is as though a man could create you by looking in your direction without the trouble of turning his head or raising his eyes ; and more wonderful still, could turn you to nothingness by the same look unchanging. Certainly creation costs God very little, absolutely no effort at all.

All this is highly mysterious and verges on the incomprehensible. Some little purchase upon it we may get by reflecting that, though an actually existing world is no necessity to God, nevertheless in its potential, ideal aspect, in the *scientific* as distinguished from the *historical* aspect, the world is necessarily for ever within the divine vision, being held in that knowledge of God which is called "the knowledge of simple understanding" (C.G. i. 66). As for the essence of the universe, even we can see that it makes no difference to the understanding of God (and therefore neither to the being of God, C.G. i. 45) whether He creates the universe or not. This is intelligible by the case

of an architect with his plan of a church. Theoretically, the architect should know the church from his plan perfectly, ere ever a stone is laid ; and the sight of the church, when complete, should teach him nothing, it being all in his mind already. Theoretically, but not practically, for no architect is so consummate as not to have much to learn by his every experience of building. But God is a consummate architect, and creation can teach Him nothing. Neither can creation make any addition to His being, or to the sum total of reality, absolutely speaking, when God is reckoned in. God and the universe together are simply equated to God alone, as $\infty + 1 = \infty$. Whatever being the universe contains, all that being is already in God, albeit in a fuller and higher manner. To take a poor example, there is not more of me for my being photographed. I may know my face better from seeing the photograph, but God already knows His own essence perfectly, and all the manifold ways in which that one essence is imitable in creation (*C.G.* i. 48-54).

I will explain what I mean by "the scientific as distinguished from the historical aspect" of the world. In the sciences of mathematics, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, politics, nay even in the theoretical part of such arts as architecture and shipbuilding, we deal with essences rather than with existences : we are not concerned with what is, but with what might be, and would be on such and such a hypothesis : we trace the connexion of idea with idea, and are not disturbed

at being told that the thing answering to the idea either has never yet been or has perished. In that way our knowledge in some sort imitates God's knowledge : it rises above created actuality. Thus essence is more than existence to the philosopher, the ideal more than the actual, content more than fact. The philosopher is as a little god, inasmuch as he holds his head above creation and lives in the order of the unchangeable and the eternal.

Now for a further palliation and assuagement of our great difficulty. Strictly speaking, even man is already in act before he wills, and does not change to a new act by willing. This is what I mean. Ere ever a man wills, some change must come over him,—that is true. He must come to think of something that he thought not of actually before. And that thought must raise in the appetitive and conative part of his soul some complacency which was not there before. That complacency is called 'spontaneous': it is natural, and, proximately at least, not free. But when, adverting to the complacency, he sustains it and makes it his own, then his act becomes free and the volition is complete. But this completion of the free volition is not the bringing in of any new act. The man is in act already : he merely sustains, and thereby, no doubt, intensifies, the act in which he finds himself. I must refer to my book on Free Will for further explanations.¹ But in this theory man is already in act

¹ *Free Will and Four English Philosophers*, London, Burns & Oates, 1906, pp. 89, 103.

upon a given object ere ever he wills and freely chooses it. His free choice means no new act, but an intensification of an act already present. Of course *omnis comparatio claudicat*. A comparison never goes quite on all fours, else it would be an identity. But it is something to note that this great mystery of God's being unchanged by the act of creation has its counterpart in man, inasmuch as even man passes not into a new act when he exercises his faculty of free choice, but enacts under a new formality the act of complacency already there.

But, however palliated, the difficulty still remains, *Stat difficultas*. Suarez devotes to it a whole section of his *Metaphysica* (disp. 30, sect. 9), where he examines the solutions attempted by Cajetan and others. Such solution as is possible he finds in the infinity of God. But he adds: "I am not ashamed to confess that I find nothing which satisfies me except only this, that in matters of this sort we must believe that of God which is more in keeping with His ineffable perfection" (n. 35). And so he states his conclusion: "We must say that, by one and the same most simple and indivisible act, without any real augmentation or diminution thereof, God wills all things that He wills, and wills not what He wills not, be the volition necessary or be it free" (n. 37). Father Bödder follows Suarez: "God's essence is infinite, and in virtue of its infinity is sufficient to form and execute any decree without internal change" (*Natural Theology*, Stonyhurst Series, pp. 240, 241).

Silvester Maurus, S.J., in his Commentary on Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, tom. iv. p. 549, Paris edition of 1886, notes the difficulty as one that affected the Stagyrite. "The root of nearly all Aristotle's errors was a difficulty greatest of all, that of reconciling the divine simplicity and immutability with the divine liberty. . . . For if God wills freely, therefore He might not have willed : therefore the act of willing is distinguished from God, who might have been without such act : therefore there obtains in God some composition out of the power of willing and not willing, and out of the act of willing or willing not : therefore there obtains a certain mutability, whereby God might have been otherwise disposed than He is at present, so that, whereas He is actually willing, He might have been willing not. Aristotle succumbed to this difficulty, and to save the divine simplicity and immutability he denied God's liberty."

At that rate, creation would be a necessity of the Divine Nature, nay, this particular creation and no other. This universe would be God's *pleroma*, the complement of His Being. In it He would be eternally evolving Himself : the whole web of things would be for ever being spun out of His substance, and would be part of Him. This is the common doctrine in India. Whether Aristotle pushed his conclusions so far, I am not prepared to say. But the Church will have none of it, and bans the doctrine as Pantheism, albeit Hindoo sages protest against the imputation. The Hindoo doctrine is certainly not

the Judæo-Christian doctrine of a free creation out of nothing : it does not posit creation of a world substantially different from God.

Pantheism, it may be admitted, does cut the knot. It denies that God could be without the decree of *creation*, or rather, *generation* of the world. It makes creatures a natural emanation and outcome of Godhead, part of the fullness of Divine Being. God then would know creatures as part of Himself, by the knowledge which He has of Himself. Pantheism has its own shortcomings. It impairs the sense of the awful Majesty of God. It impairs the sense of human responsibility, making our every action part of a natural and even divine process. To prove man's free will is to refute Pantheism, and is perhaps the best refutation of it. It is no sufficient reason for turning Pantheist, that Pantheism gets rid of some difficulties. The classical adage, *difficilior lectio, ideo verior*, may be turned *difficilior philosophia, ideo verior*, when there is question of things divine. The human mind is not so ample that its ready comprehension can be taken for the best test of divine truth.

Let us return to the mystery, re-state the difficulty of it, and then, though we cannot solve it, we may point out with Suarez, but more definitely, why the fact is to us a mystery. If God with a will to create, and God with no will to create, is absolutely unchanged ; if, as Scotus says, He wills opposite things together, or, willing one can by the same act will the other, why then should creatures exist rather than not

exist? Not for any difference on the part of themselves, for, antecedently to creation, they are blank nothing. Not for any difference on the part of God, for Scotus assures us that there is no difference between God willing and God not willing to do anything outside of Himself. True, he puts in "a difference of regard," *diversi respectus*; but this is no real difference: there are no real relations of God to His creatures, as all the Schoolmen aver. We have then this dilemma. Either God is unchanged in creating, and then (it is argued) creation is a necessary act in Him: or creation is a free act, and then it imports a change in God. If God is unchanged in creating, the act of creation is the selfsame act which God Himself is, that is to say, a necessary act. If creation is a free act, the will to create is something superadded to God's essential Being; and God the Creator is not quite the same as God would have been had He not chosen to create. Either then a mutable Deity or a necessary creation.

To all this argumentation the Schools apply the distinction, *entitative, terminative*; but the mystery is, as I have observed, how such a distinction is possible in the case. It is not difficult to prove on grounds of reason and revelation that God is immutable: similarly, that God is Creator of the world. The mystery lies in the conjunction of these two conclusions:¹ how God, being Creator, remains exactly the same to the whole extent of His Being as if He had never willed

¹ See Newman, *Idea of a University*, 462-4, ed. 1910.

to create. Turning to the arguments against the mystery, I observe that they all rest on a *petitio principii*: they assume that there must be some change *ad intra*, in the very Being of God, for any new effect that He can work *ad extra*, in the world outside. But this is begging the question; in the denial of that assumption the mystery lies. So the mystery remains,—not explained, or it would not be a mystery; not confuted, or it would be an absurdity, and a mystery no more.

An inaccessible mountain is inaccessible all round, on the north as on the south, yet with a different inaccessibility. Let us walk round this Mountain of Mystery, and view its inaccessibility from another aspect,—from the aspect of cognition: how is it possible for God, I do not say, to *create*, but to *know*, not the *possibility*, but the *individual, actual existence*, of anything outside Himself? It may be said that anything outside of God must come of God's creation: God cannot create without knowing what He is doing: therefore God knows individual existence outside Himself,—it is St. Thomas's argument (*C.G.* i. 50). It is an *a posteriori* argument, evincing the *fact*, but not the *how*. But the mystery regards, not the *fact*, but the *how*: *how* can He possibly know them, or create them either, unless they be intrinsic to His nature?

This inquiry, be it noted, probes down to the very vitals of the *Contra Gentiles*. Essentially, though few critics seem aware of it, that *Summa* is a confutation

of the two *Mahommedan Gentiles*, Avicenna (Ibn-Sina) the Persian, and Averroes (Ibn-Roschd) the Moor, whose interpretations of 'the truth according to Aristotle' were current when St. Thomas lectured in the University of Paris. All the other parts of the work are secondary accretions round the chapters in which these formidable adversaries are met. Now Avicenna argues thus:—In knowing Himself and willing Himself, which is all that He does know and will, God knows and wills Himself as realisable beyond Himself: that is, He knows and wills the whole necessary range of the ideal order of possibility, but not contingent actualities, not individual creatures. He knows the universal, but not the particular in concrete existence in this world. This view was largely current in the East, and seems countenanced by Aristotle *Metaphysics*, xi. St. Thomas confutes it, *C.G.* i. 50, 63, 65, 67, 68.

Against God's knowledge of created individuality this argument might be drawn: If God knows the world as actually existing, He knows it either (*a*) because its existence is involved in His essence, or (*b*) because its existence is involved in His creative decree. But (*a*) the existence of the world is not involved in the essence of God: otherwise the world would necessarily exist and be part of God: therefore He does not know the world's existence as involved in His essence, but only the world's possibility, which Avicenna says (and, possibly, Aristotle means to say) is all that He does know about it. Again (*b*) neither

can He know the world's existence as involved in His creative decree, because, as Scotus says above quoted, His decree faces evenly both ways,—“by the same act of willing, absolutely the same really, He wills this and the opposite (*eodem velle omnino vult hoc et oppositum*)” : in which case it would appear impossible for God Himself to know whether the world shall exist or no such thing,—whether there is any world in actual existence or no. Nor is there any falling back with Scotus upon “different regards” ; that would mean that God knows His will in relation to the world ; but such relation, not being real, is in God nothing. There is then nothing in the compass of the Divine Being whereby God, seeing Himself, can see Himself as Creator. “God is not otherwise related to things that actually are than to things that potentially are, because He is not changed by producing anything,” so writes St. Thomas (*C.G.* ii. 12, 13). His will remains really unaffected, whether He creates or not. How then shall He know creatures by anything that is in His will or decree to create? ¹

This then is the twofold mystery of the Creator,—

¹ Some sort of answer is suggested by *C.G.* ii. 100. God's knowledge of things possible is not merely generic or specific, that is to say, abstract like ours, but concrete and individual. He knows every individual that possibly can exist in any and every genus and species. Knowing them all as potentialities, He can select these or those for creation. And though creation makes no change in Him, yet the Supreme Intelligence cannot be supposed to create blindly. He must know that He wills to create, and to create this or that possible individual.

first, how He creates freely without prejudice to His immutability ; secondly, how He knows His creatures, not purely as things possible (*scientia simplicis intelligentiae*), but further in themselves or individually existing (*scientia visionis*). Suarez, while recognising the Mystery, and abandoning the attempt to explain it, indicates where the solution lies, in the abyss that we call the Infinity of God. I go with Suarez, but by Infinity I mean the Absolute Being of God. The Infinite is out of all real relation or comparison with the Finite : that is to say, the Infinite is the Absolute. Now we know that God is the Infinite and Absolute ; but as such, we cannot relate ourselves to Him. We are unable to conceive a relation that shall be real on one side only. Habitually and naturally we regard our Creator as standing in real relation to ourselves : the language of the Bible abets us in so regarding Him. It is not technically correct, but we cannot regard the Creator otherwise. It is an unavoidable anthropomorphism : what the ancient fathers called an 'economy.'

In Study II. we received what we took to be three valid proofs of the existence of God, two *a priori* and one *a posteriori* proof. The two *a priori* proofs (§§ 3, 4), namely, the proof from the ideal order and the Anselmic argument, revealed God as transcendent, Absolute, independent of the whole order of creation. The *a posteriori* proof, the argument from change, or contingent being (§ 2), showed God as Creator. We know God in both ways and under both aspects : we know Him away from ourselves, and again we

know Him as the actual author of our being. We know Him as the Absolute, and we know Him as our Creator. But we cannot conjoin these two aspects, just as we cannot see at once the north and south side of a square tower, though we have seen them both separately. Not of course ontologically, but psychologically, and as our mind is capable of representing things, the Absolute is not our Creator: we cannot conceive of Him as the free author of our being: if we are of Him at all, it must be by some necessary emanation—but that would be pantheism. On the other hand, psychologically and *quoad nos*, to our way of picturing things, though not really, the Creator is not the Absolute, but stands in some real relation to us. In the ideal order, regardless of our own actual existence, we are brought to the Absolute. In the actual order, seeing our own real existence, we are led up to God our Creator. But how the Absolute can be Creator, and the Creator can be Absolute, those two facts together we confess and know, but never can harmonise. *We cannot think* of the Absolute as Creator; and *we cannot think* of the Creator as the Absolute; and there is the end of it.

The Arian heresy was an ill-judged attempt to harmonise them by invention of an Intermediary, a Logos or Word, who was not strictly God, and yet was more than a mere creature, and in that intermediate capacity was God's instrument in creating and the mirror in which the Deity viewed His creatures.

I conclude with some words of St. Augustine, penned at the close of a discussion closely allied to the above :¹ “I fear I may be judged more easily to affirm on my ignorance than to teach on my knowledge. I return then to what our Creator has wished us to know : but as for what He has either permitted wiser heads than mine to know in this life, or has altogether reserved for the knowledge of the perfect in another life, I confess it is beyond my powers. My reason for treating the question, without affirmation, is for the benefit of readers, that they may see from what dangerous enquiries they ought to abstain, not thinking themselves equal to all heights of speculation, but rather understanding how well it is to obey the Apostle’s wholesome precept, where he says : *But I say by the grace that is given me to all who are among you, not to be more wise than one ought to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety, according as God hath assigned*

¹ Vereor ne facilius judicer affirmare quod nescio quam docere quod scio. Redeo igitur ad id quod Creator noster scire nos voluit : illa vero quae vel sapientioribus in hac vita scire permisit, vel omnino perfectis in alia vita scienda servavit, ultra vires meas esse confiteor. Sed ideo putavi sine affirmatione tractanda, ut qui haec legunt videant a quibus quaestionum periculis debeant temperare, nec ad omnia se idoneos arbitrentur, potiusque intelligant quam sit Apostolo obtemperandum praeipienti salubriter, ubi ait : Dico autem per gratiam quae data est mihi omnibus qui sunt in vobis, non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad temperantiam, sicut unicuique Deus partitus est mensuram fidei (Rom. xii. 3). Si enim pro viribus suis alatur infans, fiet ut crescendo plus capiat : si autem vires suae capacitatis excedat, deficiet antequam crescat—(*De Civitate Dei*, xii. 15).

to each his measure of faith (Rom. xii. 13). For if an infant be nourished according to its strength, it will come to grow and be capable of more : but if it exceed the powers of its capacity, it will perish before it grows."

And St. Thomas: "In man's present state, in which his understanding is tied to sense, his mind cannot possibly be elevated to any clear discernment of truths that surpass all proportions of sense : in that state, *revelation is given him, not to be understood, but to be heard and believed*" (C.G. iv. 1). But besides the limitations that come of being "tied to sense," there are essential limitations of all created intelligence, as such, even the angelic. Such essential limitation, I think, makes the difficulty we have been dealing with. I doubt if it is removable for any created mind, except for such as stand in the immediate presence and sight of God.

STUDY VI.

EVIL IN THE CITY.

Shall there be evil in the city? ¹ (Amos iii. 6).

Sosias. As a servant studies the character of his master, so do men the character of God. If the servant likes his master, he will stay with him : he will go away, if he thinks this master to be one whom he never can like. He will go away, if he can get another place : he may stay with a master whom he dislikes, if the alternative be starvation. Man can go away from God, yet not so as finally to escape Him : the runaway from God either returns spontaneously, or he is in the end recaptured and given over to punishment. This is a most serious motive for serving God, that God will punish our refractoriness and disobedience. We have not an unfettered choice here. We belong by nature to God, and God will one day assert His rights over us with awful vehemence, if we have not in time past paid Him a willing homage.

Eumenes. So that, even though we dislike our Maker, we are still fain to serve Him?

¹ See my *In an Indian Abbey*, Conversation x., for a sort of first edition of this Study.

Sosias. God will not accept of such service. His first commandment is "Thou shalt love," yet this tribute of love, which it is our bounden duty to pay, is not untinged with fear. We should fear to break this commandment of love. Many elements in our constitution impel us to break it. To break it is the way of the world, and the world is powerful over every individual who lives in it. It has been broken by a stout rebel from the beginning, and he is ever sedulous in stirring up rebellion. Against these manifold temptations we should never lay aside the armour of fear. Yet fear is but the accessory: the substance of the commandment remains love.

Eumenes. Man then must study the character of his Maker to see whether he can like Him?

Sosias. Yes, for we cannot love what we do not like. We must first get to like God. And we must get other men to like God, if we would bring them to love Him. I have thought of these stages of 'humble access' to the Most High: to *fear* (i.e. be afraid of) God, to *care for* God, to *like* Him, to *desire* Him, to *love* Him, to be *zealous in His cause*, to *die for Him*. Now, it is singularly difficult to get a modern man to fear God. Never in any age, not even in the days of Celsus and Lucian, or the days of Nero and Petronius Arbiter, were the judgments of God less dreaded on earth than at the present day. What we call 'Nature' has come to stand between us and God. For divine dooms, we have laws of nature. What used to be 'visitations from heaven'

are now the workings of nature's laws, or are referred to man's ignorance or neglect of those laws. Even if we think of God, the last attribute that we are apt to assign to Him is anger. How can the Absolute be angry? Hell and damnation are subjects unmentionable, except in the curses of the vulgar. As St. John Chrysostom wrote in an age not unlike our own; "The river of fire boils and eddies, the flame burns, and we laugh and take our ease and sin fearlessly" (Hom. 15 in 1 Tim.). Hell is not for polite society, and we are all polite, or think ourselves so. What Palgrave wrote in the year of the accession of Queen Victoria has come true: "The prevailing character of human society will be a universal approbation of suavity and delicacy of thought. Outward propriety is accepted in place of inward purity" (*Merchant and Friar*, chap. vi.). How then are we to set men on the first stage of approach to God, which is to dread His anger? Nature and this present world stand out in apparent and well-marked contour, while the next world looks faint and unreal, as though, as Thucydides says, it had "won its way into the region of the fabulous."

Eumenes. Perhaps hell is not preached sufficiently.

Sosias. You cannot preach hell with advantage except to men who are in a frame of mind to hear such preaching. You will notice how in the *Spiritual Exercises* St. Ignatius disposes the Exercitant by meditations on God and Sin, and cultivates in him all the day long a habit of seriousness and compunction, ere

he applies him to the meditation on hell. You cannot quite preach hell on a pleasant Sunday afternoon to a congregation of trippers. You may very properly refer to it, but cannot there and then set forth its horrors in detail. Everything that is received is received according to the measure of the receiver. Hell is an overpowering doctrine: to pour it out on a mind unprepared is like running a cataract into a saucer. We must begin at what I have called the second or the third stage 'to care for God,' 'to like Him.' So St. Ignatius begins: he puts before us God as our last end and happiness: he argues that any life is an irrational life, a life thrown away, which is not spent in praise and service of God; he shows all creation converging upon God, and valuable to man only as in one way or another it proves helpful to bring him nearer to His God: hence appears the absurdity, the horror, of revolting from God; of which revolt the natural consequence is loss of God, and thereby eternal misery.

Eumenes. But there is one thing that stands in the way of many men liking God,—what of the evil in creation, this evil world of suffering and scandal and sin?

Sosias. Ah, there you have anticipated me in the very topic that I was coming to. Let me introduce it with this remark. Never has the evil in the world quite borne down any man, whose steady effort it has been to act on the Psalmist's principle: *For me it is good to cleave to the Lord, and to put my hope in the*

Lord God (Ps. lxxii. 28). All the wickedness, and half at least of the anguish of life, comes of man living *without God in this world* (Eph. ii. 12). Man needs company, and God is "the Great Companion," as poor Kingdon Clifford called Him. The companionship of God inspires greatness of soul: it sets the mind above the petty miseries of life, and puts it on a level to wrestle with even colossal antagonists. Many people suffer simply because they will not rise to greatness. They suffer for lack of courage, magnanimity, and high aspirations. They become martyrs to trifles. They are Hamlets, sick in their own conceits. The Stoics recommended *ἀταραξία*, and rightly recommended it, as the remedy for the ills of life. But they did not know how to compass this "untroubled mind." Epictetus and others proposed to secure *ἀταραξία*, by the mind's own concentration upon self, making no account of anything that lay not in one's own power, *τὰ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν*,—so the opening of Epictetus's *Manual*.¹ St Augustine was wiser; "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee" (Conf. i. 1). Silly then is the man who, holding himself aloof from God, pretends that he cannot serve the Creator of so evil a world. The greatest evil in the world is separation from God, which greatest of evils this man is deliberately taking upon himself, and in so separating himself is laying aside his best buckler and

¹ The *Manual* opens: "Of the things that be, some are in our power, some not in our power."

protection against all other evils. He wants evil explained, and then he will cleave to God : that is an inversion of the right order of things : let him cleave to God first, and evil shall be explained sufficiently for practical purposes, *till the day dawn and shadows flee* (Cant. ii. 17).

Thus much for a preface : now turn we to St. Thomas, *C.G.* iii. 71, "that Divine Providence is not wholly inconsistent with the presence of evil in creation." Please read, and notice especially this argument, that some good things are mutually inconsistent, and that, to have one, you must sacrifice another : also that certain goods come of antecedent evils, and cannot possibly come otherwise. There is a flower growing here and there in crannies and holes in the East of London, which is rarer in the mansions of the West, where the climate suits it less. It is called *patientia sanctorum*, the patience of the saints (Apoc. xiii. 10), or *patientia pauperum*, the patience of the poor (Ps. ix. 19).

Eumenes. The poor are many, their patience is scant, the saints are few.

Sosias. Sanctity is everywhere a selective process (Matt. vii. 14), like the setting and ripening of blossoms into fruit. But the human spirit ever finds, *where it listeth*, some retort upon these justifications of the ways,—*unsearchable ways*, Holy Writ calls them (Rom. xi. 33),—the ways of God to men. At the back of this cavilling there lies a radical misconception of the character of the Almighty. A Being

made up of two attributes to the exclusion of all others, namely, sheer benevolence and sheer omnipotence,—such a Being, I say, is certainly not the Creator of this world. The Creator, as His work testifies, has further views concerning mankind than those which guided the behaviour of Pope's Man of Ross. This world is not an hotel with God for its landlord, entirely subservient to the comfort and convenience of visitors as they come and go. God's attitude to men much more resembles that of a feudal chief to his retainers,—a princely, open-hearted, just Leader, having aims of his own, aims which, when attained, will benefit all who help to gain them, each in his state, but meanwhile involving conflicts and losses,—a Leader not too complaisant to his followers, but making long calls upon their duty and generosity,—a Leader not devoid of that quality without which none is a Leader, I mean *sternness*.

Eumenes. I am glad you have had the courage to pronounce that word in reference to God. A Leader without an element of sternness in his nature is not a Leader, but a sort of head nurse; and even a nurse, I believe, at times must be stern. We positively repel high-spirited men and boys, and high-spirited women too, driving them away from God and from Christ our Saviour, if we make a picture of a Heart too feminine, too soft, too caressing, too indulgent. I want a strong Leader, who will at times rebuke and chastise me. I look for wisdom in my Leader, high aims, and a noble disregard of trifles. I look in Him

for a long-suffering, which may after all terminate in vengeance upon contumacy. I want justice, and of course I need mercy. I want kindness in season, a supporting hand, an encouraging call, a faithful friend. That is what I look to find in my Creator and Redeemer. With such a Guide to stand by me, I am ready to face any amount of evil. I do not want coddling, and I have lived long enough in the world to know that God does not coddle His creatures, nor Christ His followers.

Sosias. Right. And there is one attribute above all others that you and I look to find in God our Lord, it is fatherliness. *Nemo tam pater*, none is such a father. A good father, I speak from experience, does not spoil his children. Yet his fatherly affection ever cries atop of all that he does. He does not drive away his children, except the hopelessly contumacious. *Lord, Holy Father, thou art our refuge from generation to generation* (Ps. lxxxix.). Fatherhood, however, is one thing, unreasoned benevolence is another. God is neither unreasoned benevolence, nor wayward, arbitrary will. God is infinite in all perfections, but it may help us to form a better understanding of His character if we say that He is rather Reason than Will. Such is the burden of *C.G.* i. 84, 86, 87 : iii. 97, 99, 100. They are among the most important chapters in the volume. Let me read you from *Of God and his Creatures* (p. 262), a note of my own on *C.G.* iii. 97 : "The time-tables of a railway are drawn up with much care and forethought

for the nature of trains and the exigencies of traffic. The manager controls actualities, but not possibilities and conveniences. He must make his actual appointments tally with what he finds possible and convenient. In like manner all actuality in creatures depends upon the mere will of God. And God need not will to create anything at all. He might have acquiesced in His own existence, with nothing else but Himself alone in any way existing. On the other hand, God's power of creating is not an arbitrary power to create anything and everything that a foolish fancy may call up. He cannot give reality to intrinsic absurdities. He cannot, we may venture to think, create a race of mortal men without stomachs, or animals whose natural food should be stones, or a circle having the properties of a cycloid, or a politician licensed to lie. If He creates, He must create according to the eternal exemplars, the natures of things, as He views them in order of possibility in Himself. These eternal exemplars, or 'intelligible essences' as the schoolmen call them, represent whatever of truth there was in Plato's Ideas. They are founded upon the divine nature, as imitable outside of God: they are discerned in the divine intellect: they do not depend, formally speaking, upon the divine will. God's will and decree does not make and unmake possibilities."

And to continue on p. 263: "It is of the free will of God that creatures exist at all; that *these* creatures exist rather than *those*; that these existent creatures were arranged, to begin with, in *this* rather

than *that* primitive collocation. But the question recurs, what can God will? Any fantastic and bizarre combination that we chose to name? Certainly not. There are then restraints upon God's willing, restraints in the eternal nature of things, which in the last reduction means God's own nature. His will may be said to be conditioned by His nature. He is not a *merum arbitrium*, an absolute, arbitrary will. Then there must be something definite and fixed, which may be called 'nature,' against which God can have no will."

If I am not overtaxing your patience, I would read yet a third note from the same, p. 94, on *C.G.* ii. 26 :— "There is something,—we cannot call it a limitation, but we may call it a condition of divine intelligence and creative power,—a condition less regarded by St. Thomas, but forcibly commending itself to us, upon six centuries longer experience of the prevalence of evil upon earth. Fewer combinations,—far fewer, perhaps, than St. Thomas thought possible, and our short-sighted impatience might crave for as remedial,—may be really possible at all. The range of intrinsic impossibilities may extend considerably beyond the abstract regions of logic and mathematics into the land of physical realities,—one such reality, if existent, necessarily involving, or necessarily barring, the existence of another reality. Such necessity, if such there be, is no limitation of divine power or divine intelligence : God still discerns endless possibilities, and can do whatever He discerns as possible ; but much that men take for possibility is ruled out, on this

hypothesis, for sheer absurdity,—as absurd and impossible, let us say, as a ‘spiritual elephant.’ We wonder why God does not mend matters, as we would mend them, had we His power. Had we His power, we should also have His intelligence, and discern that there is no riding out of our troubles on the backs of spiritual elephants.”

Eumenes. Thank you. I understand you to call attention to the interlocked scheme of possibilities by which divine omnipotence is conditioned. But yet I do not quite understand how, if omnipotence is infinite, it can be conditioned.

Sosias. As I this moment said, it is not conditioned by external surroundings, such limitation from without being inconsistent with infinity. The one condition which Omnipotence knows is the condition of the Nature to which it belongs, as that Nature lends or does not lend Itself to imitation beyond Itself,—in other words, the condition of intrinsic possibility. God’s will can do all that is do-able, as God’s intellect knows all that is knowable : beyond the intellect and will of God there remains nothing to know and nothing to do. As in geometry certain figures have certain properties, and God cannot make them otherwise ; as in arithmetic certain additions and multiplications yield certain sums and products ; as there are fixed concords and discords essential to the nature of sound ; as in ethics certain actions cannot but be wrong in the circumstances under which they are done, while others are in their circumstances right

and praiseworthy ; as there are combinations of colours beautiful and ugly ; and architectural forms and lineaments of living beings, some fair and others hideous,—so in the nature of things throughout the whole ideal order there eternally abide fixed possibilities and impossibilities leading to enunciations of this type, ‘ If A is, there must be B, and cannot be C.’ Divine omnipotence cannot override, nor Divine volition ever will to override, these canons of possible and impossible. And among these canons we reckon this, that if creation is to be at all, there must be incident liabilities to evil, by the mere fact, on which St. Augustine insists against the Manichees, that every creature being a creature, is finite, and thereby of itself liable to fail.

Eumenes. As for instance, I suppose, if there is to be any such animal kingdom as we see around us, there must be carnivorous beasts, man included, who will prey on other animals to their own solace and support, albeit to the evil of their prey.

Sosias. We cannot all turn vegetarians : some of us must eat meat or starve. I pass to a more crucial instance, an instance involving the dread liability to sin, and even the occasional committing of the same, and if sin, then also punishment of sin. I am assuming, what I have argued at length elsewhere, the truth of human free will. If a man comes to me with difficulties about the conciliation of this wicked world with a good and omnipotent Creator, I first enquire whether haply he be a determinist.

Eumenes. Hard or soft?

Sosias. Hard or soft, it makes no difference. On any system of determinism either there is no such thing as sin,—a very common conclusion in modern philosophy,—or we are driven into Calvinism. Assuming sin and free will for facts, I proceed to enunciate a law. I cannot tell whether it be a law natural and necessary,—a law which must obtain, if intelligent creatures are to be at all,—or a positive law set up by God's free will and wisdom, but a law it certainly is, that the happiness of intelligent creatures, which you see described in *C.G.* iii. 25-63, is not obtainable otherwise than as the meed of victory. Now victory means conflict, and conflict is a trial of courage and fidelity, and wherever there is a real (not a sham, and fantastic) trial, there must be a real incidence of prevarication and failure; and where such incidence is real over a large area of conflict, some are bound to prevaricate, some are bound to fail, some are bound to sin: μέλλουσιν ἀμαρτάνειν, "they are sure to sin."

Eumenes. Do you mean, this or that definite individual is bound to sin?

Sosias. No, for were he bound to sin, he could not be said to be on trial: he would have no choice. A moral trial is called a *temptation*. Temptation in any creature means a likelihood of sin. Severe temptation, great likelihood; slight temptation, small likelihood: no likelihood, no temptation, although there be severe annoyance. Where many are severely tempted, and all and each likely to fall, we are sure

that some will fall, though in no one case will the fall be a necessity. Much temptation then, over a wide area of many persons, cannot be without some sin; and God has chosen to make a wide world of much temptation, because He wishes to be glorified by men's fidelity in conflict.

Eumenes. I have read somewhere that God knows what any man would freely choose to do, even under circumstances in which that particular man will never be placed.

Sosias. So the Jesuit Luys Molina taught, and this knowledge which he ascribed to God,—the knowledge of free acts that would be done under contingences never to be realised,—was called *scientia media*, as being intermediate between the “knowledge of simple understanding” and the “knowledge of vision” (*C.G.* i. 66).

Eumenes. At that rate, God sees under what conceivable circumstances a given man would sin, and under what other circumstances he would not sin?

Sosias. Certainly.

Eumenes. God then could secure the glory of conflict without sin by always placing man in circumstances under which he would be faithful, and always keeping him out of circumstances under which He foresaw that he would fall. I count under ‘circumstances’ those inner workings of God upon the soul which you call ‘actual graces.’

Sosias. I saw what you were coming to. I remember when, where, and in what company I first

elaborated the difficulty, and what reply a good theologian, my professor, made me. He said that with such precaution on God's part man would have no real trial. It would be as in the case of those rapier duels between French soldiers, where the regimental fencing-master stands by and parries every dangerous thrust. It would seem to involve continual divine interference with the natural course of events. We should have no fights but sham fights, in which there never was any real danger of sin, and no praise would be due to any innocence. Or if you are not satisfied with these answers, and I see they are controvertible, then I clinch the matter thus: God actually has not arranged things so, therefore He was not bound so to arrange them.

Eumenes. I perceive we are out upon a sea of difficulties.

Sosias. I have thought of an answer to your difficulty over and above any that I have yet given you. It has long lain in my breast, and has helped me: but it is somewhat transcendent and goes back to the origins of things.

Eumenes. Oh, I do so like that sort of speculation!

Sosias. Imagine then the divine loneliness, with no world as yet in existence. God has before Him the vision of possible worlds, A, B, C, . . . Z, AZ, BY, and so on to infinity. Every world is a perfect means, and the one perfect means, to one particular end designable by the divine intelligence and will. Thus world A leads to end *a*, world B to end *b*,

world Z to end z, world AZ to end az, and so forth. God needs none of those ends : but if He chooses to realise any one of them, He must create that particular universe which alone will realise that end fully : in the nature of things there is no other way. God then has fixed upon some particular end, let us call it *mr*. What precisely that end is, we do not know. Ask why God chose it above other possible ends, and the answer is that in all the commencements of creation God is sovereignly free. But He has chosen *mr* ; and *mr* can only be realised by the universe MR. MR is the present universe. The whole world, everything that is and everything that happens in it, is one construction, one organic whole. The whole of it is subservient to God's ultimate purpose, subservient however not all in the same way ; but, according to the distinctions of theologians, some things serve God's end *per se*, other things *per accidens* ; some things *antecedenter*, others *consequenter* ; some things *primario*, other *concomitanter*, etc., etc. There are free agents and necessary agents, pious agents and impious ones : but all their doings in their several various streams meet and flow finally onward together to the accomplishment of God's great purpose. The universe is perfect, not absolutely, but teleologically in reference to the special end for which God designed it. Not all its components are equally valuable,—there are in fact some very ill components, of the peculiar brand of *the man of sin* (2 Thess. ii. 4),—yet all are finally overruled by the Goodness that presides over all, and are

rendered subservient to the end of all. "The perfection of the universe," says St. Thomas, "while depending necessarily on the good of some particular components, which are essential parts of the universe, has no necessary dependence on others, although even from them some goodness or beauty accrues to the universe, such things serving for the fortification or embellishment of the rest" (*C.G.* i. 86). Yet this very "fortification and embellishment" is part of God's final purpose. To that purpose nothing in heaven or on earth is irrelevant; and that purpose the world as a whole will in the end perfectly and successfully achieve, *non obstantibus*, as the papal bulls say. So St. Thomas:—"Divine providence, being absolutely perfect, arranges all things by the eternal foresight of its wisdom, down to the smallest details, no matter how trifling they appear. And all agents that do any work act as instruments to His hands, and minister in obedience to Him, to the unfolding of that order of providence in creation which He has from eternity devised. But if all things that act must necessarily minister to Him in their action, it is impossible for any agent to hinder the execution of divine providence by acting contrary to it. Nor is it possible for divine providence to be hindered by the defect of any agent or patient, since all active or passive power in creation is caused according to the divine arrangement, (*C.G.* iii. 94)."

Eumenes. From a chapter entitled "Of Predestination, Reprobation, and Divine Election" (*C.G.* iii.

164) I gather that both the elect and the reprobate minister to God's ultimate purpose.

Sosias. Yes, though in different ways. There is a greater and a lesser glory of God. *In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earthenware, and some unto honour and some unto dishonour* (2 Tim. ii. 20). There are *vessels of anger prepared unto destruction, and vessels of mercy prepared unto glory* (Rom. ix. 22, 23). What makes the difference, we need not now enquire: certainly the difference lies not in God's purpose being gained in one and frustrate in the other: God's purpose is gained, though not alike gained, in both. We are getting on to that ground which St. Thomas describes (*C.G.* i. 5), of "things that transcend reason, proposed by God to man for his belief,"—things that philosophy cannot ascertain, but upon which, once ascertained by revelation and apprehended by faith, she is able to a certain extent to theorise. And thus that mysterious purpose which we called *mr*, God's final aim in creation, is not so entirely hidden from us as it might seem.

Eumenes. I am at a loss to see your drift.

Sosias. Let me read you some texts from the New Testament. *He hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world* (Eph. i. 4). *The mystery of his will . . . to gather all things to a head in Christ, things in the heavens and things on earth* (Eph. i. 9, 10). *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end* (Apoc. xxii. 13).

The end of the law is Christ (Rom. x. 4); and if of the Jewish dispensation, much more of the Christian dispensation, and finally of all creation. *The first-born of all creation, because in him all things are created in the heavens and on earth, things visible and invisible, . . . all things are created through him and unto him; and he is before all, and all things stand together in him*—he is the centre of the universe (Col. i. 15-17). *Every one in his own order, the first-fruits Christ, then they that are of Christ: . . . afterwards the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and the Father . . . that God may be all in all* (1 Cor. xv. 23-28). These and other texts are a revelation of the Creator and of the *mystery of his will* in creating. The world was made for the Word Incarnate, for the Son of God to take flesh and live in. For the symbolic expressions *mr* we may substitute *Jesus Christ*, inasmuch as He is the principal feature of God's mysterious purpose in creating. It will help our study if we notice about Him three things: (1) He is not a solitary; (2) He is a suffering Christ; (3) He is a just Judge.

(1) He is not a solitary, but *firstborn among many brethren* (Rom. viii. 29). *He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying Lo I, and the children that God hath given me. Since then the children are partakers of blood and flesh, himself also in like manner hath come to share the same* (Heb. ii. 12-14). He became incarnate in hypostatic, or personal, union with one human body and soul. He becomes in a manner

incarnate again by a union, short indeed of the hypostatic, yet very close and true, with every human creature who believes in Him and is sanctified by His abiding grace. This union He establishes and confirms by His Sacraments, especially Baptism and Holy Eucharist. Every faithful Christian in sanctifying grace is an extension of the Incarnation. Christ lives in him (Gal. ii. 20; Col. i. 27; John vi. 56); and he is in some sort a second Christ, even as (the comparison is our Lord's own, John xv. 5) the branch of a vine is a repetition of the stem. The Word Incarnate in God's design is incomplete without the Church. The whole Christ, as St. Augustine is so fond of insisting, is Christ and His Church, the Head with the members, who form His Mystical Body, which Body is the *complement* (πλήρωμα) of the Head (1 Cor. xii. 12 *sq.*; Eph. v. 23 *sq.*; iv. 13).¹ Our Lord speaks (John xv. 6) of branches that remain not in Him, the Vine, that is, of members who once were in the living unity of His Church, and afterwards, whether by open apostasy or other unrepented sin, have come to be separated from Him and cast into the fire. This tells us that the union

¹ "The whole Christ is head and body; the head the only begotten Son of God, and His body the Church, bridegroom and bride, two in one flesh" (S. Aug., *de unit. eccles.* 4). "As hand and body are one man, so, says the Apostle, the Church and Christ are one: wherefore he puts *Christ* instead of the *Church*" (St. John Chrysostom on 1 Cor. xii. 12). Not to know this, is to leave St. Paul unknown, as he is unknown to many.

of any individual faithful Christian with Christ is not indissoluble, so long as this mortal life lasts. Those in whose case this union shall never be finally broken off,—those who shall breathe their last, spiritually living members of Christ,—are called by theologians *the elect* (cf. Matt. xxii. 14 ; xxiv. 22, 24). The elect are the abiding members of Christ, *the sheep whom none shall wrest from his hand* (John x. 28) : they are *that which his Father hath given him, greater than all*, i.e. victorious over all obstacles (John x. 29 ; vi. 37, 39 ; xvii. 2, 11, 12, 24 ; Rom. viii. 38-9). The saying that the world was created for Christ may be put in other words thus, that the world was created for the elect, the permanent *complement* of Christ, for whom especially and singularly and, we may say, *selectively*, He became man. *Omnia propter electos* (2 Tim. ii. 10), all things in God's design are for the elect. For the elect the rivers flow, the sun shines, and earth ripens her yearly fruit. For the elect are the reprobate, for their temporal trial and for eternal contrast with them.¹

Eumenes. A sharp contrast indeed ! But nature ordinarily avoids sharp contrasts. Her divisions shade one into the other.

Socias. We cannot construct the universe *a priori*. For visible things we must go by the witness of our senses, and for things invisible by the word of God.

¹ A woman who had been grossly maltreated remarked to a Clergyman who was compassionating her, "Well, there must be some of the other sort."

What we see, or what we are divinely told, may be very different from what we should expect. It is, I think, theologically certain that the division of 'elect' and 'reprobate' is adequate, and that absolutely every man must be on the one side or the other. But there are grades of reprobation. Unbaptized infants are reprobate, inasmuch as they are shut out from the vision of God. Yet very different is their lot from that of other reprobates, who are cast into everlasting fire. These infants make no small proportion of the human race. It is currently believed in the Church that they are relegated to a quarter of hell called Limbo, where the fire burns not, and there is much *natural* happiness, not irrespective of some *natural* enjoyment of God, otherwise it would not be happiness. The number of dwellers in Limbo might be indefinitely increased, if . . . but I will go no further with this hypothesis, and will content myself with observing that while all men are either elect or reprobate, there will still be many ranks and grades among them in the world to come. There remains the huge inorganic stellar universe, to the glory of God, and to the everlasting contemplation of men and angels. Thus St. Thomas's idea of "a wonderful chain of beings" (*C.G.* ii. 68), making the "perfection of the universe" in an ascending hierarchy, shall have fulfilment in that world to come, which is also the world to last. At the head of that hierarchy stands the Word Incarnate. About and around Him, but still below Him, are ranged his elect; and below them, the rest

of creation,—irrational creatures, men and angels, rewarded according to their works, in manifold ranks, one below another, even to the lowest hell.

Eumenes. Allow me to repeat the criticism which I got from an Oxford friend, that you solve the problem of evil in this world by making large drafts on a world to come.

Sosias. And I maintain that the problem admits of no other solution. This world is the next world a-building. Stop the building, and how can you possibly expect the construction left on your hands ever to be satisfactory? Moreover, this is the Christian solution. It is not fair to taunt Christians with the evil in the world, if you will not allow them to meet the objection in their own way. Evil to a Deist is a difficulty far more formidable than to a Christian. The former has to meet the difficulty on grounds of philosophy alone. It is not fair to the Christian to treat him as a Deist, and so compel him to all the disadvantages under which the Deist lies. You may dissect a dead organism, but not a living one. It is death to the living to be cut up into parts. Christianity is a living organic whole, and must be dealt with as a whole. As a Christian, I insist on meeting opponents by proposing *the whole counsel of God* (Acts xx. 27). Might we not add that the very insufficiency and incompleteness and consequent temporal evil of this world is some proof of a world to come? οὐδὲν ἀτελές, “nothing left incomplete,” as Aristotle might say.

Eumenes. Quite so. This world and the next are as ball and socket.

Sosias. (2) To go on to the second point of our study. That was the fact of a suffering Christ. *We see Jesus through the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour: for it became him, for whose sake and through whose agency are all things, having brought many sons to glory, to perfect through sufferings the leader of their salvation* (Heb. ii. 10). Surely suffering must be part of the scheme of a world of which a suffering Christ is the centre. *Every creature groaneth and is in labour* (Rom. viii. 22), because creation is made for the Crucified. *We suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him* (Rom. viii. 17). Let the Deist fetch philosophy to bear on the evil in the world. The peculiarly Christian solution is the doctrine of the Cross. *Per passionem et crucem ad resurrectionis gloriam.*

Eumenes. If all mankind were good Christians, that answer would be sufficient. Nay, the difficulty would almost vanish; three quarters of the evil in question would disappear. But now leaving out the lower animals, whose futurity we do not understand (cf. *C.G.* ii. 82), we see so much suffering among men not borne in any Christian spirit, and not promising to bring the sufferers ever to share in the triumph of the Crucified.

Sosias. (3) That carries me to my third observation, that Christ is a just Judge. His justice and His judgments are to us inscrutable. Long ago the

Psalmist saw that *judicia tua abyssus multa*, "thy judgments are a deep abyss" (Ps. xxxv. 7).

Eumenes. Then how do you know that He is just at all?

Sosias. Not inductively by observation of details, though even there the experience of His dealing with ourselves goes for something. But we know it on the larger principle that Christianity is true, and Christianity rests on the teaching that Christ *will render to every man according to his works* (Rom. ii. 6-12). Now, however works may fall short of opportunities, they certainly never can outrun them. You never can judge of a man's works until you see, not only what he has done, but also what opportunity he had of doing better. God alone and His Christ is judge of that latter head. Man, however, may often ask himself, when he sees his neighbour behaving amiss, "What opportunity has he had of knowing any better?" "What should I myself have done, had his opportunities, and no more than his opportunities, been mine?" Grades of reward and punishment in the future life must be very various, according to the varying opportunities of individuals and races of men upon earth. Many hereafter will fare better than they seem likely here, and some will fare worse. You never can tell what God is leading any given man up to. You may be sure that in many cases the suffering is part of the man's purification, that it may be well with him, or at least not so ill, for all eternity. But, after all, some will never be purified from their

sin : they will suffer for it endlessly a doom so terrible that whatever they have endured in this life need hardly be taken into account. The joys and the sorrows of earth alike have been lost upon such men. They have profited by neither. They have perished by their own folly. Their wilful, contumacious malice has cut them off for ever from hope. Consequently upon that abuse of their own free will, they still have their place in the accomplishment of that divine purpose for which the world was created. The glory of the King is on His right hand, the reward of the loyal and pardon of the penitent ; on His left, the punishment of the rebel. In their day, the deliberate choice of the rebels' will was declared in the rebellious pronouncement, *We will not have this man to reign over us,—this man* being the Word Incarnate, the centre of all good in creation, *the beginning of the ways of God* (Prov. viii. 22). In God's day, that same outraged Majesty will speak in justice, retributive, awful, the needed answer to a crying sin : *As for those mine enemies, who would not have me to reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me* (Luke xix. 14, 27). Sin is a disturbance of the balance of the order and perfection of the universe. Equilibrium must be restored and atonement made, whether with the sinner's will, which is called repentance, or against the sinner's will, which is called simply punishment.

STUDY VII.

PROOFS OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

(C.G. ii. 79, 80, 81).

Eumenes. I am beginning to think that there is no valid philosophical proof of the immortality of the soul, but we must receive the doctrine as part of the Christian revelation and hold it simply on faith.

Sosias. *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* (Gen. xviii. 25).

Eumenes. Certainly, but what of that?

Sosias. It is not right of a judge to leave wickedness finally triumphant.

Eumenes. Nor is it, on the whole, finally triumphant even in this world. Nothing is final upon earth. As good causes come in time to overthrow, so do bad causes.

Sosias. Then good has no advantage over bad; and my argument for a Court of Revision in a world beyond the grave still holds. That would evince, not indeed at once the immortality of the soul, but at least its survival after death, which is the hub of the difficulty, for such a catastrophe as parting from the body will not befall the soul a second time: if it can survive that, it may well survive anything. I should

not myself go the length of conceding that good has no advantage over evil in this life. The argument of Plato's *Republic* is sound, that, virtue being the health of the soul, things cannot be going well with a man who is living viciously, having his soul in an unwholesome state, nor with civil society either, where most of the component members are thus unhealthy and disordered.

Eumenes. In other words, virtue is its own reward, and vice its own punishment upon earth : justice then does not call for a future life.

Sosias. I distinguish : virtue is its own reward, but is not always felt as such : still less is vice always felt as a punishment ; now it is of the essence of reward and punishment that they be felt and appreciated as such. But we have pursued this argument far enough. It is an argument, moreover, from which the charm of novelty has long departed.

Eumenes. As from most other arguments for the soul's immortality. They are stale, outworn, unconvincing.

Sosias. You are in a mood to vituperate philosophy, because you have expected of her too much. Mark now what I say ; and that it may make the more impression on you I will put it as a saying of Heraclitus : *Philosophy is endless*. It belongs to the category of τὸ ἄπειρον or *the infinite* ; and therein precisely lies its charm, as man is made for the infinite. You can never get quite to the bottom of any philosophical question. Physical science has its finalities, so far as

its conclusions can be checked and verified by experiment, which is ultimately evidence of the senses. Experimental psychology, as such, falls under physical science. History may be considered a sort of experimental course of politics. But philosophy is endless. You can never stop the mouth of a philosopher. You can never knock the man down with an argument, absolutely irrefragable and irresistible, leaving him no possible (I do not say 'no reasonable') alternative but silence. He can always go on cavilling, "an he will."

Eumenes. That is an interesting view, but how do you reconcile it with the rulings of the Church that "the existence of a God, Creator and Lord of all things, can be proved from reason," that is, philosophy, according to Romans i. 20; Wisdom xiii? I refer to the action taken by the Holy See against the Traditionalism of De Lamennais, and the confirmation of that decision by the Vatican Council.

Sosias. A good question, to which this, I take it, is the answer. Besides the 'speculative intellect,' or, *νοῦς*, the operation of which begets philosophy, man is endowed with 'practical wisdom,' 'prudence,' *φρόνησις*, often called 'common sense.' The latter is a check upon the former. The rule of 'practical wisdom' is the Aristotelian rule of the golden mean, or moderation in all things, even in philosophising. The existence of God then can be proved from reason and philosophy by any one who knows how to philosophise. But no one knows how

to philosophise, unless prudence and practical wisdom govern him. To one who will give attention to every possible cavil, peer into every hole, probe every nook and corner, look, so to speak, under every bed, the existence of God can never be finally proved, nor any other truth either : such a one will spend his life in argumentation.

Eumenes. But how am I to know the point at which I am to stop and make up my mind to certitude?

Sosias. The point cannot be fixed by any written canon, only by "the judgment of the prudent,"—as Aristotle says (*Nic. Eth.* ii. 6), ὡς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὀρίσσειεν. Prudence comes by intuition, a higher form of intellect than Discursive Reason.¹ Intuition, a faculty closely allied to Conscience, must check the excesses of (discursive) Reasoning no less than those of Passion. You can no more allow unlicensed reason than unlicensed passion. Of the two, I almost prefer the latter, except for its consequences to bodily health.

Eumenes. How very un-Platonic you are grown with years! Where is your youthful devotion to the author of the *Republic*? Do you not remember there how Intelligence (νοῦς, λόγος) is Guardian and Ruler of the city of Mansoul? Reason there rules, and is not ruled by any.

Sosias. Plato as usual, splendidly unpractical, and

¹ Intuition, like Conscience, must be educated, and gains by experience and the teachings of life. In a Christian, it further gains by the teaching of the Church.

therefore most suggestive of philosophers! Why, of all men, philosophers seem to me most to want governing. A philosopher, ungoverned, runs into what is called a 'crank.' I am not so sure, after all, that Plato did not see something of this. The philosophers in his model City are put through years of rigid training before they are permitted to rule (*Rep.* vii. 537-540). Then I am not sure that my distinction of Intuition from Reason might not be maintained from Plato. You remember how at the end of the sixth *Republic* he distinguishes *νοῦς* from *διάνοια*, assigning to the latter an inferior function. If we might call *νοῦς* Intuition, and *διάνοια* Reason,—but enough of Plato. Cf. *Phaedo*, 85 C, D.¹

Eumenes. Still men will fight over their intuitions. Where one man declares that his intuition bids him arrest his reasoning, another will call it, not intuition, but obscurantism, and will have it that the argument may be pursued with profit still further, even to the drawing, perhaps, of quite a different conclusion.

Sosias. Be sure, no intervention of *φρόνησις* will ever stop philosophers from fighting. Still I think we may find even in our philosophical experience

¹ Aristotle (*Nic. Eth.* vi., last sentence) says: "Nevertheless practical wisdom, *φρόνησις*, is not mistress of philosophy, *σοφία*, as neither is the medical art mistress of health." I am afraid I am forced to disagree with this. Of course, *σοφία* needs no correction so long as it remains *σοφία*. But human wisdom is apt to evaporate into folly, as St. Paul observes (1 Cor. i. 20). Is not Kant's *Practical Reason*, revising and reversing the conclusions of his Understanding, a good instance of *φρόνησις* rectifying *σοφία*?

some indications where we ought to stop. I remember in the days when the conditions of a degree compelled me to work at mathematics, how well I could tell that I was off the track in a calculation by the results becoming portentous and unmanageable. Now consider the ordinary proofs of the existence of God. They are taken up and transformed by Kant to suit his philosophy: Kant is transformed by Hegel: Hegel again by the last thinker who has grappled with him: what does that show but that by going further with the argument we have become *embogged*, and the further we go, the deeper we shall stick in the mire, till not only the existence of God disappears, but apparently all other truth with it? Whereupon practical *wisdom crieth aloud in the streets* (Proverbs i. 20) that we should revert to the solid ground of the original argument, and acquiesce in the original conclusion, that there is a God, Creator and Lord of all,—we being well aware all the time that there is much under this conclusion that might be further debated, but judging that the debate cannot be carried further without passing the limits of human competence. This, as philosophers merely. But given the Christian revelation, we have a much more certain indication when and where to stop. We stop at and hold on to a conclusion which is guaranteed by the word of the Church. We are persuaded that further argumentation, seeming to subvert that conclusion, must be ultimately fallacious, and we will not lose our time in chasing such a will o' the wisp,—except perhaps in

the hope of drawing out of the mire a two venturous friend. Let me refer you to *C.G.* i. 4 ; iv. 1.

Eumenes. But is not Intellect naturally supreme everywhere ?

Sosias. Yes, my dear sir, ἀπλῶς, but not κατὰ τι, as Aristotle would say,—in the abstract, but not in the concrete. The eternal fallacy of philosophers is their thrusting of abstract propositions into places where there is no room for them, owing to facts not considered in the abstraction. Logicians call it, *fallacia a dicto simpliciter ad dictum secundum quid*. Intellect, as such, ideal, perfect intellect, ever must rule. But such is the Divine Intelligence alone. Narrow is the range within which man's intellect is competent : so Socrates interpreted the Delphic oracle, *Know thyself*, "human wisdom is worth little or nothing" (*Apologia* 23 A). We need continually to check ourselves, "not to push intellect beyond where intellect should go, but to use intellect within the bounds of sober discretion," which is the meaning of St. Paul's famous precept, μὴ φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν (Rom. xii. 3). You see the Apostle teaches what I have said, that διάνοια, or discursive reason, is to be checked by the φρόνησις, the intuition of prudence,—much more by the *obedience of faith* (Rom. i. 5). Prudence bids us stop a quarrel in time, does it not ? and not fight it out to all lengths ; well it also bids us stop an argument in time. This is just the weakness that Shakespeare has drawn out in Hamlet, that he thinks too much ; that,

as he says himself, "the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought,"—that, as Horatio puts it, he "pursues the matter too curiously."

Eumenes. Then that is a right sentiment, put by Ennius in the mouth of Neoptolemus :

*Philosophari volo, sed paucis,
Nam omnino haud placet.*¹

Sosias. Yes, we must philosophise within limits. This caution is inculcated in the one mention of philosophy in the Bible : *See that there be none who deceives you* (literally, *kidnaps you*, *συλαγωγῶν*) by philosophy (Col. ii. 8). Do not think that I am running down philosophy. We need cautioning against all the good things of life,—wine, tobacco, golf : that does not prevent our being rationally fond of them. But to revert to the immortality of the soul. Open your *Contra Gentiles*, ii. 79-81, and, bearing in mind, as we have detailed them, the deficiencies and infirmities of our human philosophy, let us take the arguments for immortality for what they are worth. *Our* belief in immortality does not rest on these arguments. They are to us, like most other things in philosophy, a *jeu d'esprit*.²

¹ "I would have philosophy, but in a brief compass : I have no mind for philosophy unlimited," quoted by Cicero, *De Oratore*, ii. 37, 156.

² We Christians are borne up by the *βεβαιότερον ὄχημα*, the *λόγος θεῖος*, desiderated by Simmias in Plato's *Phaedo*, 85 D, preferred by St. Peter even to the evidence of visions (2 Pet. i. 19).

Eumenes. (Reading, *C.G.* ii. 79), "Every intelligent subsisting being is imperishable : but the human soul is an intelligent subsisting being." That means, I take it, "angelic natures are imperishable : but the human soul is of a nature akin to the angelic, both soul and angel being spiritual substances." That postulates the existence of angels, and the objective validity of the concept of substance ; also that the soul is a spiritual substance : three large assumptions in face of modern philosophy.

Sosias. The argument is useful to this extent : it points out the line of proof to be followed by any one who would prove the immortality of the soul. He must prove, against Sadducees ancient and modern (Mark xii. 18-27), that there are spirits, and that the human soul is such. He must first prove the spirituality of the soul, and then and thereby its immortality. What does St. Thomas say next?

Eumenes. "Nothing is destroyed by what makes for its perfection. But the perfection of human souls consists in a withdrawal from the body, . . . fixed on high generalisations and immaterial things . . . not following bodily passions."

Sosias. A Platonic argument, an echo of *Phaedo*, 64-68.

Eumenes. Full of Platonic weaknesses, I should say. As usual, in his excessive admiration of arithmetic and geometry, the only developed sciences of his day, Plato supposes that the more abstract a science, the more perfect. He forgets that abstraction

(not to be confounded with generalisation) is a process of dropping elements of fact, and therefore of truth. As St. Thomas says: "The mental picture of 'animal,' whereby we know a thing generically only, yields us a less complete knowledge than the picture of 'man,' whereby we know an entire species. To know a thing by its genus is to know it imperfectly, and, as it were, potentially: to know it by its species is to know it perfectly and actually" (*C.G.* ii. 98). I should further say that the knowledge of the species is incomplete without knowledge of the individuals. Consequently St. Thomas is at pains, and involves himself in no small difficulty, in attempting to prove that angels know individual things (*C.G.* ii. 100).¹ A knowledge of individual things, obtained through the senses, with the aid of sensible instruments, like the microscope and spectroscope, and sensible chemical reagents, is the basis of modern science. High generalisations, or rather, hasty generalisations, regardless of observation and experiment, were for centuries the bane of science. Who shall say that the work done in an observatory or a laboratory is a "withdrawal from the body"? Is the chemist, the biologist, the astronomer, conversant with "immaterial things"? So much for the intellectual perfection of human souls. As for their moral perfection, that does not consist, as the Stoics thought, in the extirpation of bodily passions, and the life of a

¹ The difficulty is drawn out in my translation, *Of God and His Creatures*, pp. 178-9.

Fakir, but, as Aristotle laid it down, and St. Thomas after Aristotle, in the regulation of passion by temperance and fortitude : while as for justice, that is principally taken up with the distribution of bodily things. The ideal of the *Phaedo* is not a human ideal at all. Withdrawal from the body does not make the perfection of the human soul. Still more is this evident when we consider, what Plato never understood, that the soul is the form of the body. How ever can a form be perfected by separation, whether 'in point of activity' or 'in point of being,' from its connatural matter?

Sosias. Poor Plato! This is a savage assault. Not altogether unprovoked, I grant you, but you have hustled the venerable man with shameless and wanton violence. After all, ought not a human ideal to be superhuman? Is it not the making of man even upon earth to be ever striving to become something more than man? Have you forgotten those two glorious chapters of Aristotle (*Nic. Eth.* x. 7, 8) bidding us "play the immortal," ἀθανατίζειν, and setting mere human and moral virtue only in the second place? Nay, the physical science to which you refer is a continued effort to rise above the senses, above the particular, into the region of the immaterial and the universal, else it would not be science at all. Wedded to his senses and to what he can touch and smell, such a student may do for a shop-boy, to stand behind a counter and take money for drugs : but he will never grow into a scientific chemist, for he cannot

theorise ; and without theory there is no science, neither physics nor metaphysics. Then I want to draw your attention to the use of the word *immaterial*. It does not mean the *abstract*, although Plato often wrote as though it did. Hegel has written wisely of "the concrete universal." And without travelling to Hegel, let us read over some of the notes to *God and His Creatures*. Look at p. 132 : "We may, nay, we always do, take a universal view of a corporeal thing, as 'camel,' 'steam-engine.' It is a capital error in philosophy to make all universals abstract ideas. All concrete things are universalised in the mind." Again (p. 146) : "'Immaterial' means 'stripped of individual particularities.' It does not quite mean 'abstract : ' for you might 'immaterialise,' or 'universalise,' let us say, the whole of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, so far as contour and structure go. You cannot understand 'house' in such a way that your intelligence is limited to this house now before you, so that, if you happened to encounter another, you would not know what it was. To understand is *to take for a type*." Lastly (p. 150) : "The intellectual soul is an actually immaterial being : while the phantasm is open, or in potentiality, to being dematerialised, or stripped of its material and individualising conditions by the action of the active intellect. 'Dematerialising' means only 'universalising.' I have a universal idea of a rainbow without blinding my mind's eye to its colours." Your physical enquirer,—your biologist with dissecting knife

in hand,—immaterialises, or universalises, the subject upon which he works, all the while that he uses his senses most keenly upon it. He ‘immaterialises’ it, I say, in all those features in which that subject stands to him as a type of other possible subjects according to the special purpose of his study here and now.

Eumenes. Well, what of that? How does it go to show that the said biologist has a spiritual and immortal soul?

Sosias. Because it argues him to have within him an understanding which feeds upon truth for all time, and not merely upon sensible impressions available here and now. But, as is the object of understanding, so is understanding itself: the object of man’s understanding is truth everlasting: therefore man’s understanding, man’s intellectual soul, is itself everlasting. So (*C.G.* ii. 55, n. 10): “The understanding attains to science of perishable things, only in so far as they are imperishable,—that is to say, in so far as they become to the mind universals. Intellect, therefore, as such, must be imperishable.” Perishable food argues a perishable body; imperishable food, an imperishable mind.

Eumenes. A venturesome inference! But philosophy cannot crawl on all fours, she must jump chasms. Two chasms I observe here, and two princes of philosophy rising up to drag you into them. There is Averroes, conceding intellect to be immortal, but not the individual human intellect. And there is Plato,

with whom to prove immortality of the individual soul is also to prove its pre-existence. However, I am willing to leave them both to St. Thomas (*C.G.* ii. 59-61, 73, 83, 84); the more so as I seem to detect a pretty equivocation in the use which you,—and St. Thomas also, I fear,—make of the word ‘immaterial.’ In your notes on *God and His Creatures* (pp. 122-128, 135-140) you say: “‘Immaterial’ means ‘stripped of individual particularities.’ . . . ‘Dematerialising’ then means ‘universalising.’” The immaterial then is the universal. When, then, in the same quoted notes I read: “The intellectual soul is an actually immaterial being,” am I to understand that the soul is a universal? No, I know you do not mean that: you mean that the soul is spiritual. Here then is the ambiguity, the equivocation, of which I complain: you dance to and fro between ‘immaterial’ meaning ‘universal,’ and ‘immaterial’ meaning ‘spiritual.’ This very ambiguity is pointed out in a note of your own which you have not quoted: you will find it on p. 159: “Is not the term ‘separated from matter’ here used in two senses: (a) of a logical separation by abstraction; (b) of a real separation in nature?”

Sosias. The distinction is well worth making. To the charge of equivocation I reply that ‘immaterial,’ in the sense of ‘universal,’ does mean ‘spiritual,’ not indeed in point of the object represented, but in point of the mode of representation. I contend, along with St. Thomas, that every human

being is of a spiritual nature, and is ultimately a spirit, able to look at material and corporeal things in an immaterial, or spiritual, way. To universalise a corporeal object,—Nelson's Column, as the note suggests,—is to regard it in a spiritual way, in a way proper to a spirit. Man shows the spirit that is in him even in the use of his bodily senses : for while sense, as sense, never goes beyond the particular, man in his sensory perception passes on to the Universal. The soul is not a *universal* entity, but it is a *universalising* entity, which argues a spiritual being.

Eumenes. As Macbeth says : "We will pursue this business no further." To the next argument.

Sosias. The next argument, I see, rests on the fact of the natural desire of immortality, and the principle that a natural desire is never frustrate in the entire species. The argument is drawn out at greater length in *C.G.* ii. 55, proving the imperishability of angels. The same principle is invoked a third time, *C.G.* iii. 48, to show that perfect happiness must somehow be within man's reach.

Eumenes. I have seen the argument based upon the theological ground, that God does not implant in man desires which He does not purpose to fulfil.

Sosias. An excellent ground to take in a popular discourse, but somehow I have always disliked importing theology into metaphysics or psychology. Those sciences are prior and should lead up to Natural Theology, not rest upon it. The root of the matter is the Aristotelian maxim, "Nature does

nothing in vain," which is not a reference direct to the wisdom of God, but an induction from the course of nature, and in that light I have exposed this argument in *Ethics and Natural Law*, pp. 14-21. Whatever truth there is in Darwinism, rather confirms this axiom. What is human life but an evolution?

Eumenes. Of the race, not of the individual.

Sosias. If there any cogency in these arguments for immortality, also of the individual. We are not less but more evolutionist than the ordinary Darwinian, —at least in this that we make more of 'ontogenetic' development, first the vegetable life, then the sentient, then the rational and human, finally the quasi-angelic existence of the world to come. This ontogenetic development is thus set forth by St. Thomas: "The higher a form is in the scale of being, and the further it is removed from a mere material form, the more intermediate forms and intermediate generations must be passed through before the finally perfect form is reached. Therefore in the generation of animal and man,—these having the most perfect form,—there occur many intermediate forms and generations, and consequently destructions, because the generation of one being is the destruction of another. The vegetative soul therefore, which is first in the embryo, while it lives the life of a plant, is destroyed, and there succeeds a more perfect soul, which is at once nutrient and sentient, and for that time the embryo lives the life of an animal: upon the destruction of this, there succeeds the rational soul, infused from without"

(C.G. ii. 88-89). Upon this I observe in my translation (pp. 168-169): "This doctrine of three successive souls in man, two perishable and one permanent, is noteworthy; and though not now generally accepted, there is still something to say for it." I have nothing to add to the argument beyond what I have written elsewhere, except this, that the desire of immortality and perfect happiness, though natural, needs to be fostered: it may be stifled, and some men may say with truth that they have it not. In that respect it goes with eyesight, with intelligence, with conscience: any of these things man may lose, and by losing any of them he declines from his proper perfection.¹ I must add that man may lose this desire, not only by misconduct and gratification of his baser instincts, but also by the misfortunes of bodily and mental overstrain, and the physical depression thence ensuing. The man out of condition, whether morally or physically, is not the normal man from whom the philosopher argues.

Eumenes. The next argument is this, that substance is never annihilated, not material substance, therefore neither the spiritual substance of the human soul. Whatever changes material substance undergoes, the mother-stuff underlying it, called *materia prima*, remains unchanged: therefore, whatever various impressions the mind receives, the 'potential intellect,' the subject of those impressions, cannot perish.

¹ See the fine Platonic passage on the spoiling of the soul, *Rep.* x. 611.

Sosias. The argument is a good one, if you allow that the soul is a spiritual substance. When material substance undergoes change, either the change is accidental, and the substance remains : or it passes into another substance, if that be possible : or it is resolved into its constituent elements, whatever they may be. Such are the facts as we know them, leaving out of count that contestable entity *materia prima*. Man undergoes many accidental changes in life. He undergoes a substantial change at death : the substance of his humanity is broken up : we see what becomes of his body : is there anything else of him left ? What are the constituent elements of man ? Is he matter all over ? Or, if he has a soul, is it as the souls of dumb animals, of matter and resolvable into matter ? By way of some partial answer to this question I would have you observe how little of individuality there is found in species below the human. No wonder if in dumb animals the species remains while the individual perishes utterly. "All animals of the same species behave alike, as being moved by nature, and not acting on any principle of art : for every swallow makes its nest alike, and every spider [of the same species and family] its web alike" (*C.G.* ii. 82).

Eumenes. What of educable animals, monkeys, elephants, horses, dogs ?

Sosias. They are educable as their nature approximates to human ; and man educates, humanises, and so far forth individualises them. But they never

attain to the individual character by which man is marked off from man. This individuality comes of intelligence and free will, attributes of a spiritual soul. Now a spiritual soul is not matter, nor of matter : therefore the spiritual soul remains, when the material element in man's composition falls away. I pass to the next argument, the strength of which lies in this proposition, "the human soul is a form not dependent on the body for its being," which proposition is proved inasmuch as "the act of understanding is not done through any bodily organ." That is connected with the position of the human soul being the "form of the body."

Eumenes. I remember, an Aristotelian position, adopted by the Church at the Council of Vienna.

Sosias. Distinctly Aristotelian, differentiating Aristotle from Plato. Modern Science and Church authority alike stand with Aristotle. Yet it must be confessed that the Platonic dualism of soul and body as boatman and boat makes the easier case for the soul's immortality. The more distinct the soul is from the body, the more apt also is it to survive the body. No wonder then that, while Plato is a strong champion of the immortality of individual souls, it must ever remain problematical whether Aristotle, holding as he did Intellect (*νοῦς*) to be eternal, held also the continuance after death of the intellectual soul of Peter or James. St. Thomas, taking over from Aristotle the soul as the form of the body, still takes it with a *caveat* to save the soul's independence and

ultimate survival. He will have it that the soul is the form of the body, and something more,—that it is not wholly immersed in matter,—that its highest operation, to wit, understanding, is carried on without bodily concurrence, except in so far as phantasms, in which the body does concur, are necessary antecedents to all human understanding (*C.G.* ii. 81).

Eumenes. But is that physiologically true? How about the grey matter of the brain? In a French work, *Le Psychisme Inferieur* by Dr. Grasset, reviewed in *Revue de Philosophie* for July, 1906, pp. 56-78, it is contended that thought and volition have an organ, namely, the prefrontal lobe of the brain; and the proof alleged is this, that when the prefrontal lobe is damaged, all the inferior powers of mind remain in their activity,—sensations come in, phantasms abound, *vis cogitativa*, or ‘particular reason’ flourishes, but intelligence and voluntary control are gone.¹ It would seem then that, just as sensation and phantasy exercise and wear out certain definite portions of the bodily system, so do intellect and volition wear out other definite components of the body, and depend on the healthy condition of those definite parts. For every mental effort, high or low, there is a corresponding expenditure of bodily tissue. Nothing whatever that mind does goes unpaid for: the body bears the

¹ Dr. Grasset is severely taken to task by Dr. Pierre Marie in *Revue de Philosophie*, March, 1907. But the medical difference between them does not affect my main issue.

charge of every mental activity. Least of all does intellectual activity go unpaid for. And we can specify the organ of the body that stands most of the expense : that organ is the grey matter of the frontal lobe of the brain.

Sosias. Your argument is fairly obvious, and the later Schoolmen are prepared with their answer. They will tell you that the expenditure of brain tissue goes to the supply of phantasms, without which intellect cannot work, but has nothing to do with the working of intellect itself.

Eumenes. How do they know that? The answer seems to me gratuitous and unproved. It could only be established by experiment and observation ; and experiment and observation militate direct against it. As Dr. Grasset and others have shown, when the pre-frontal lobe alone is damaged, and the rest of the brain is sound, sensation goes on, phantasms abound, but the thinking power characteristic of man is altogether deranged,—not for want of phantasms, but for want of brains.

Sosias. Yes, that difficulty merits consideration at Louvain.

Eumenes. Fee, foh, fie, fum ! I smell the blood of a Platonic man, even that very odour which I detected not long ago,—I mean the notion that the more intellectual, the less corporeal. Reach me your Plato there, and let me look for passages. Here I find one :—“ When then does the soul lay hold of truth ?

For when she seeks to examine anything in concert with the body, clearly then she is deceived by the body. Very true. Is it not in the reasoning process then, if anywhere, that any portion of the world of realities is made clear to the soul? Yes. And then the soul reasons best when nothing sensible is by to trouble her, neither hearing nor sight nor pain nor pleasure, but as far as may be the soul arrives to be by herself alone, letting the body go, and to the best of her power withdraws from communion and contact with the body, so to reach out to reality? That is the case" (Plato, *Phaedo*, 67 B, C). And still more clearly in the *Theaetetus*: "As for being and not-being, likeness and unlikeness, sameness and difference, and the rest, . . . it seems to me that there is no bodily organ at all for such cognitions, but the soul of herself seems to consider the common elements that pervade them all. . . . The soul considers some things of herself, and some through the faculties of the body" (*Theaetetus*, 185).

Sosias. Two valuable passages, which seem to have influenced Aristotle, and led to his recognition of the *νοῦς χωριστός* or 'separate intelligence,' on which Averroes founded his doctrine of the Universal Intellect. You have the replies of St. Thomas in C.G. ii. 60, 61. But I confess myself at a loss to say what precisely Aristotle meant by the expression *νοῦς χωριστός*.

Eumenes. Do you think it necessary to suppose

that Aristotle ever made up his mind on those deep questions of God and Soul and Personal Immortality? If he speaks obscurely, as he does, may we not put down his obscurity, not simply to his habitual abruptness and carelessness of expression, but to the fact of his mind itself being perplexed and obscure? In that case, Aristotle is like the ablest men at present in our English Universities. Their minds are as dark as their utterances. The shallower men speak out, and you have no doubt what they mean.

Sosias. I believe you are right. We will hand over Aristotle to Silvester Maurus, and to that excellent modern commentator, G. Rodier, *Aristote, Traité de l'âme* (Leroux, Paris, 1900). We will keep to St. Thomas, who did know his own mind and delivered it clearly. St. Thomas then distinctly falls back upon the formula, *the soul, the form of the body*. It is the form of the body, but not in every respect. There is a distinction between the substance of the soul and its faculties; a distinction stoutly maintained by St. Thomas against his predecessors in scholasticism. The intellectual faculty then is distinct from the sensory, and both from the substance of the soul. *As intelligent*, the soul is not the form of the body, but works apart from the body, and so is apt to survive the body. Nevertheless,—since intelligence is not an entity, physically distinct and separable from the soul, but there is only one soul in man, which is at once intellectual and sensitive,—it follows that this one intellectual

soul is *truly and of itself and essentially* (*vere ac per se et essentialiter*, as the Council of Vienne in the age after St. Thomas defined) the form of the body, yet not on its intellectual side, but on its sensitive side and in its intellectual substance.

Eumenes. I am satisfied as to St. Thomas's mind and meaning. But now I repeat my challenge, and the reasons I gave for making it:—Is it physiologically true, in the light of modern research, that “bodily matter has no share in the soul's intellectual activity,” and that “the act of understanding is not done through any bodily organ.”

Sosias. You propose your question under two heads. To take the wording of the first head, I find it open to objection inasmuch as to say that bodily matter has no share in the soul's intellectual activity appears to ignore the fact, clear in the light of modern research, that every activity of the soul, even the highest, has to be paid for out of the matter of the body, involves an alteration in some portion of the structure of the body, is dependent on the energy of the body; and, when bodily energy quite gives out, the energy of the soul goes for nothing, and can effect nothing, so long as soul and body remain united. Bodily matter, then, enters into intellectual activity, not exactly as “sharing it,” but as a condition *sine qua non* for such activity to take place.

Still I am loth to throw over a notion, certainly a favourite with St. Thomas, bearing on so vital an

issue as the immortality of the soul. It may perhaps be rehabilitated thus. It must be confessed that the concurrence of the frontal lobe of my brain with my thinking is not altogether on a par with the concurrence of the crystalline lens and retina of my eye with my visual perception of objects, the concurrence of the vibrating bones of my inner ear with my hearing, the concurrence of the nervous filaments distributed over my skin with my sense of the hardness or softness of the chair on which I sit, or of the temperature of the room. From the mere point of view of expenditure of energy and the wearing away of tissue, there is no difference: thought is fully as body-wearing a process as seeing or hearing or touching. The real difference is this, that whereas through colour-vibrations striking on lens and retina my sense of sight is impressed, and through sound-vibrations striking on tympanum and bones of ear and auditory nerve an impression is wrought on my sense of hearing, and through tactile impressions or heat-waves my sense of touch or temperature receives its impression,—my intelligence, on the other hand, is not impressed by the molecular changes set up in my frontal lobes. Sense is passive, intelligence is active. A sensation is an impression from without; but an act of intelligence, a thought, a concept, is a putting forth of the mind's own activity. 'Thoughtful' men are distinguished from 'impressionable' persons. By sensation man shows himself a subject of the

kingdom of external physical nature ; by thought he enters upon an inner kingdom of his own, mental and moral. Understanding means the mind taking the initiative, not the body. In understanding, the mind does something on its own account,—hence the Aristotelian and Thomist phrase *νοῦς ποιητικός*, *intellectus agens*.¹ Intellect declines to take the sensory world at first hand, as dumb animals do : it transcends and transforms the data of sense, it apprehends relations, it argues substance, it makes abstraction, it universalises. So St. Thomas : “ Intellect is proved not to be the actualisation of any bodily organ from this fact, that the said intellect takes cognisance of all sensible forms under a universal aspect ” (*C.G.* ii. 60, n. 4). Whereas a bodily organ can tender by its ministration nothing but a particular impression, intelligence universalises. To understand is to universalise, to see individual things as *types*, to see beyond the individual what Plato calls the ‘Idea.’ The attempt has been made to explain the universal by the laws of Association, as though the universal were nothing but a rosary of particulars, the present tied to the past and bringing it up accordingly, by associations of

¹ In Fr. Maher’s *Psychology*, ed. 4, pp. 304-313, the Thomist theory of perception is ably expounded. The one point that I would insist on is, that Intelligence has an activity of its own, and is not wholly determined from without. And this is at the back of the distinction between *species impressa* and *species expressa*, as I understand it.

‘Contiguity’ and ‘Similarity.’ If this attempt, ingeniously set forth in Bain’s *The Senses and the Intellect*, were successful, Intellect would be resolved into a mere *rechauffée* of Sense, and Thomists would be fain to confess that, being ultimately naught but Sense, it is the actualisation of a bodily organ. At that rate, Intellect could nowise deserve to be called, with Aristotle and St. Thomas, χωριστός, ‘separate,’ or ‘separable,’ and a heavy blow would be struck against the philosophical argument for the immortality of the soul.

St. Thomas writes: “No faculty, the activity of which reaches to the universal aspects of all corporeal forms, can be the actualisation of any corporeal organ. But such a faculty is the will: for of all the things that we can understand we can have a will, at least of knowing them. And we also find acts of will in the general: thus, as Aristotle says, we hate in general the whole race of robbers. The will then cannot be the actualisation of any bodily organ” (*C.G.* ii. 60). Will and Intellect, however distinguishable as faculties, are inseparably one: as Aristotle says (*De anima*, III. ix. 5), both belong to the intellectual part of the soul: the will is defined “the rational appetite.” Not merely, however, through its ultimate identification with Intellect can we argue, as St. Thomas does, that Will is not the “actualisation of any bodily organ.” The claim can be made out for Will, or such, even more clearly than for Intellect, as such. I speak of the

essential act of free will, on which topic I have written elsewhere at length.¹ Briefly, the act of free will essentially consists in the sustaining under advertence of a present complacency, the said complacency having arisen spontaneously and necessarily,—one might say, ‘automatically.’ This resting upon, sustaining and authentication of an already present affection is not an effect ascribable in the order of causation to cerebral and other bodily conditions going before ; and yet, had they not gone before, and so helped to induce the present complacency, the sustaining of that complacency, which is the very act of free will, obviously could not have taken place. You cannot sustain what is not already there. But the sustaining is itself a pure spiritual act. It is paid for by an expenditure of bodily energy, and yet all the corporeal energy of the universe could never have brought it to be. An idea occurs to me of running up to town to see some curious sight. If the mere occurrence of a pleasing idea is enough to start me on my way, I am simply insane. Or I may be too tired, too exhausted, to make up my mind to go or not to go : for it is an effort to make up your mind. Neither of those two cases is in point : they are both anomalies. In the normal condition of body and mind, an attractive idea attracts, but upon advertence it does not compel approval, still less lead to action. To approve it is to

¹ *Free Will and Four English Philosophers*, Burns and Oates, 1906.

intensify a current of mental and bodily energy already flowing, and often, by that intensification to induce action which otherwise would not have taken place. The original current,—the approval which intensifies that current,—the action consequent upon that approval,—all are so many expenditures of corporeal energy, which any physicist skilful enough, howbeit no man is skilful enough, might measure. Nevertheless, though the cost of the approval marks a physical quantity of energy, in itself measurable, the approval itself is no physical process: it is an immediate interposition of spiritual soul. Eminently, free will has got no bodily organ.

Nor is the Law of the Conservation of Energy broken by this interposition of a spiritual power. The total quantity of energy in the bodily system is not increased by the act of free will, but there is such a thing as 'whipping up energy.' Obviously it depends on the individual will, and not merely on the individual strength, how much work the individual does. Without increasing the volume of water in the Thames, you may increase the force of the current by embanking the sides. The will can give a new and useful, purpose-serving direction to energies which otherwise would have been dissipated on devious courses and gone to waste. But is not the giving of this new direction a new expenditure of force? Yes, but not of physical force,—if by *physical* you refer, not to the effect to which the force is terminated, but to

the source whence it proceeds. Yes, it is a new force, of another kind from that which is regulated by the Law of the Conservation of Energy. It is a force, not amenable to physical science, but to psychology proper, which, I take it, is not a department of mechanics. It is not a material, or corporeal, but a properly spiritual force. And yet, once the direction is given, the act done under that direction is paid for by the expenditure of bodily energy,—as, when the organist's hand presses down the keys of the organ, the note emitted is paid for by the escape of a proportionate amount of air pumped into the pipes by the bellows, albeit the organist's own directive action owes nothing to the bellows.

In *C.G.* ii. 57, St. Thomas examines whether the relation of soul to body is rightly described by Plato as that of *mover* to *moved*. The answer is in the negative: the soul is not the *mover*, but the *form* of the body. However, I think, there is no difficulty in conceding this much to Plato, that on the side of will, when we come to the issue of free will, the soul may be described as the *mover*, or rather *guide* and *control* of the body, not as originating and setting up, but as sustaining an existent complacency with the bodily action thence ensuing.

Eumenes. One more question, touching the immortality of the soul. How do you show that any thought can possibly go on in the absence of those familiar previous conditions, *species sensibilis*, phantasm,

memory, *vis cogitativa*, all of which come to an end in death? ¹

Sosias. That is shown, so well as mortal man, quite unexperienced in the life of disembodied spirit, can show it, in St. Thomas's answer to the fifth objection (*C.G.* ii. 80, 81, arg. 5).—"So long as the soul is in the body, it cannot understand without a phantasm, nor remember except by the cogitative and reminiscent faculty whereby phantasms are shaped and made available. But the being of the departed soul belongs to it by itself without the body: hence it will understand by itself after the manner of those intelligences that subsist totally apart from bodies,"—i.e. the angels. The last argument I notice in the chapter (*C.G.* ii. 79) amounts to this: So vigorous frequently is the mind a very short time before death, that we cannot believe a slight organic alteration of the body to have clean wiped out that keen intelligence. The argument may be more rhetorical than philosophical, but its persuasive power is very great. Indeed I believe that, next to the Christian revelation, this has been one of the most potent influences in the diffusion of the belief in immortality. Who that had lived with Philip Neri could bring himself to think that that last Corpus Christi Day, which he kept with such holy exultation, proved for him "the first dark day of nothingness" as well as "the last of weakness and distress"?

¹ Cf. the Angel's words in *The Dream of Gerontius*, "nor touch, nor taste," etc.

Eumenes. No, I cannot believe it, and mankind never will.

Sosias. In conclusion, I recommend you to read carefully *C.G.* ii. 80, 81, two chapters which will carry you deep into Thomism. For a modern presentation of the argument for immortality I refer to my friend the late Dr. Caird's *Lay Sermons and Addresses*.

STUDY VIII.

GOD TRANSCENDENT AND IMMANENT.

Sosias. God is said to be 'transcendent' inasmuch as He is distinct from and infinitely above all other being; 'immanent' inasmuch as He is in all other being. A great man lives for the most part away from the company of his inferiors: he shuns 'low society.' But God's greatness does not carry Him into seclusion, away from His creatures. After all, low society does very well without the presence of the great man, and is rather constrained and incommoded by his coming among them. But God's presence is necessary for inferior beings to be at all.

For some understanding of this matter, we must dwell in the first place on the unity of God. The unity of God is admirably proved by St. Thomas (*C.G.* i. 42). To the arguments there alleged this may be added, that as God is the source of all being and all truth, if there were more than one God, there would be several orders of being and of truth, disparate and unconnected with one another, not combined in hierarchy. Being would be pooled in two separate fullnesses. Truth would not tally with truth, nor science with science, the truth and science whereof the one

God was the centre being irrespective of the truth and science attaching to the other. We should require, each of us, two minds to deal with these two separate Gods. Such cleavage of truth and being is unthinkable. The laws of thought require the unity of Godhead.

Eumenes. Do they require also the unity of Being?

Sosias. Of ideal Being, yes : cf. *C.G.* i. 51-54 ; of actual Being, no, under a distinction.

Eumenes. Let us have the distinction.

Sosias. In one sense it is true to say, 'God alone exists,' for in comparison with His existence other beings are not. In another and more ordinary use of language we say that, besides God, there is in existence an immense universe of beings which truly are, and yet are not God. Human language being the reflection of human thought and experience, a thing is commonly said to *be* according to a human standard of existence. Tested by that standard, the things that make the Universe certainly do exist. But, coming to think of God, our thought fails, our standard cannot take His measure : we apply to Him the word 'being ;' it is not the right word ; or, if it is right, it is only right inasmuch as it is the nearest word that we can get, but it remains all insufficient. The Name of God, as the Hebrews of old said, is incommunicable, known to Himself alone (*C.G.* i. 32).

Eumenes. Take care, or you will have me believe that we know nothing whatever about God.

Sosias. There is the difficulty met in *C.G.* i. 14,

29, 30 : iii. 54 : iv. 1 : add iii. 49, n. 3. We know God in the first place negatively, by denying of Him the attributes of creatures, either because they involve imperfection, as when we deny of Him corporeity, or because they are anyhow immeasurably below what befits Him, as when we say that God is not substance, as substance is found in creatures, but is substantial in a higher and eminent way. As St. Thomas puts it (l.c.), God is substance "according to the compass of the name," but not "according to the mode of signification." He is all that 'substance' implies in the way of positive excellence, and far more. Thus I deny of God 'substance,' as a term that says too little of Him (as I might quarrel with a man for calling Westminster Cathedral a Catholic Chapel), and again I affirm 'substance' of Him, because He is much rather substance than accident. In this way my knowledge of God is not merely negative, but in some sort positive. The higher notes of praise befit Him ; and the higher they are, the better do they befit Him. Thus I call Him 'personal,' because He is not a blind force ; because He is far more like a man endowed with intelligence and will than He is like an automaton, or like any lower animal, such as a lion. The positive terms that we use of God may be called 'dynamic' terms, seeing that they express tendencies and directions of thought. I call God, let us say, 'intelligent.' And so He is 'intelligent.' He is, if I may use a vulgar expression, 'getting on that way' which I call the way of intelligence ; only,

He goes so far on in it, that the poor little beginning of intelligence, which is all that I can master and appreciate as such, is wholly unfit to stand for His infinite intelligence.

Again you have it (*C.G.* i. 32-34) that terms are never used in the same sense of God and of His creatures, yet not in a wholly different sense. They are said to be used in an 'analogous' sense according to analogy of 'proportion,' or reference, as of a higher type to a lower. This brings us back to the transcendence of God. What creatures are, He eminently is, in a distinct and better, yet not wholly disproportionate way.

Eumenes. I heard it the other day alleged against the transcendence of God, that if God is high above and distinct from all other beings, then is He not all being, and consequently is not infinite, those other beings, which He is not, limiting and excluding His Being. God is not infinite, it was said, because He is not sun, moon, and stars.

Sosias. That objection would hold good on either of these two hypotheses. (1) That God is wholly unlike other beings: that His being and theirs is utterly disproportionate and dissimilar: that nothing in the world is made in the image and likeness of God, or bears His stamp or shows the least vestige of Him, so that from what the world is we cannot gather the least inkling of what God is. (2) That God is so like the world as to come under one common genus with it, to be as it is, a sort of 'first among

equals.' We might say, roughly and for illustration's sake, that in the former hypothesis God would differ from the world as a mountain differs from the Iliad ; on the latter, as the Iliad from a prize-poem. Either way, the world would be an addition to God, and God would be the less for not being the world. Neither way could God be said virtually to contain the world : not in the one way, because His being and its would be utterly incongruous and disparate ; not in the latter, for two subjects of the same universal idea,—two oranges, two elephants, two men,—and similarly, God and the world, if they are both in one category,—repeat one another with varieties, and are ranged side by side.

All these suppositions are set aside, and the objection vanishes with them, when it is borne in mind that "the things that are said of God and creatures are said analogously, nothing synonymously" (*C.G.* i. 32, 34). Created being is no limitation to God, because God virtually contains all created being in a higher and more excellent way. Created being is no limitation to God, because it stands not on the level on which God stands, but on an infinitely lower level, to which were God formally to descend, He would cease to be God, as substance would cease to be substance by becoming accident. That cannot limit God, which does not meet and touch God in the rank in which God is. There you see, framed and glazed, over the mantel-piece, a photograph of King George V. Is His Majesty limited by not being his own

photograph? Would he not cease to be King and demise the Crown, were he to become that piece of cardboard? Does he not contain in his own person eminently and in a better way all the portraits that can possibly be taken of him? And yet we say, and truly say, of the photograph what we say of the living monarch, "That is King George V ;" but we say it *analogously*, not *univocally*.

Eumenes. I take that objection to be fully answered.

Sosias. The immanence of God in creation you will find laid down in *C.G.* iii. 68, "that God is everywhere and in all things," inasmuch as He sustains all things by His power and knows them all in His wisdom.

Eumenes. I am not satisfied with that. The astronomer knows something of the constitution and ongoings of Sirius, but, happily for himself, he is not in Sirius. The King has power in India, yet he is not in India. The sun is a co-determinant cause of the motion of the earth, and yet is ninety-five millions of miles away. I know something of ancient Athens in the days of Pericles : yet I never was in Athens ; and were I there, I should find little of that Athens which I know once was. You are making a jumble of presence, power, activity, and knowledge. Presence is neither power, nor activity, nor knowledge. It is simply *being there*, whatever that may mean.

Sosias. Would you speak of that mirror as being *present*, for its *being there*, over the mantel-piece?

Eumenes. Why, no.

Sosias. (Reading from a book): "Presence is an attribute of thinking beings. And there are degrees of presence, according to the intensity of thought and affection. A home-sick boy may be bodily present in the schoolroom, but his mind and heart are far away with mother whom he has lately left."¹ I see no difficulty in your being 'spiritually present' in ancient Athens; or in a Christian of to-day, while devoutly meditating on the Crucifixion, being spiritually present on Calvary A.D. 29. Mind is in a manner timeless as well as placeless, and enjoys a strange power of projecting itself into past and future time as well as to distant regions of space. Your astronomer is spiritually present in Sirius, where the spiritual element of his nature takes no harm from the flames. God is a Spirit, and is where His thought is. Besides, as He is a Pure Act of Understanding (*C.G.* i. 45), what and where His understanding is, that and there He is.

Eumenes. You might call it, in Platonic language, a *noetic* presence.² I will think that over. Anyhow, action in the order of efficient causation is not presence, as the instance that I have alleged show.

Sosias. You must distinguish mediate from immediate action. The power and consequent action of

¹ *Waters that Go Softly*, p. 160. I pass over strange stories of persons being actually *seen* in distant places where they have fixed their thought very strongly.

² *Ibi sum ubi cogitatio mea est* (*Imitation of Christ*, iii. 48).

King George in India is mediate, through his ministers there and the messages which the Home Government send them. As for the sun's attraction upon the earth, whether gravitation acts through a medium, as Newton thought, or from a distance, as seems to me more probable, the example may be set aside, because God is not in the category of place. He does not occupy one place, and thence radiate His action upon His surroundings. St. Thomas (*C.G.* iii. 68) speaks of "the error of those who say that God is in some definite part of the world, whence the motion of the heavens has its origin." He cannot be locally distant from His creatures, for locality is not predicable of Him.

Eumenes. But then neither can He be locally present.

Sosias. He can be in a creature that has local position, in which case locality is predicable, not properly of God, but of the creature which is the term of His action. I go back to my distinction of immediate from mediate action. The immediate action, I say, of an immaterial agent involves the presence of that agent to the effect. Now God's creative action is immediate. The effect of creation is to bring substantial being out of blank nothingness. The powers of all created agents are utterly at fault and useless there. It is the proper, immediate work of God alone (*C.G.* ii. 21, n. 6). But if the universe in the first moment of its existence was of God, it is equally of God each successive moment even until now. God

is the abiding cause of the permanence of the universe (C.G. ii. 15). He preserves things in being (C.G. iii. 65). Therefore He is eternally present to the universe. He cannot do anything, and not be where He does it,—*where* He does it, and *when* He does it. God is *somewhere* by doing something *there*, and at *some time* by doing something *then*.¹

Eumenes. Then, before the universe was created, God was nowhere.

Sosias. A captious difficulty, tacitly supposing that before creation there was somewhere, some real place, where God was not. The supposition is inadmissible. Antecedently to creation, there was no *place*, no *time*, and the predicates *where* and *when* had no application.

Eumenes. No actual application, I grant, but surely they stood for something in the ideal order of possibilities.

Sosias. Yes, in that order they had what is called their 'foundation,' the predicate *when* in God's eternity, and the predicate *where* in God's immensity. *Eternity* points to *duration*, which is the virtual sum of all possible times; and *immensity* to *space*, which is the virtual sum of all possible *places*.

Eumenes. You have noticed as a peculiarity that St. Thomas does not discuss Space nor the Immensity of God (*Of God and His Creatures*, p. 239 note).

Sosias. Space, I always think, is given to us, not to understand but to wonder at and dream of at nights.

¹ *Deus est in omnibus rebus sicut agens adest ei in quod agit.* St. Thomas, Sum. Theol. 1^a, q. 8, art. 1.

The topic of divine immanence happily does not refer to God's presence throughout space, but to His presence in creatures placed in space, if they are material, or situated somehow in the *field of activity* which answers to space for angelic beings. As for Immensity, St. Thomas seems to reduce it to Omnipotence and Omniscience. Divine power is ἀμφιλαφής, to use an expressive Homeric word: it *takes hold* of creatures *all round*, wherever they are, and Divine wisdom knows them all round, through and through, whatever they are. Thus reaching everywhere and through everything by power and wisdom, and so by presence, God may be said to be *immanent*, also to be *immense*.

There is a special and peculiar immanence of God in His Saints, in whom He is said to "dwell by grace:" but that is not discussed by philosophers. Let me refer you to C.G. iii. 151 and to *Waters that Go Softly*, pp. 159-167.

STUDY IX.

MIRACLES.

“HEREBY is excluded the error of sundry philosophers, who have laid it down that God can do nothing except according to the course of nature” (*C.G.* ii. 22).

“If then by the word (God) you do but mean a Being who keeps the world in order, who acts in it, but only in the way of general Providence, who acts towards us but only through what are called laws of Nature, who is more certain not to act at all than to act independently of those laws, who is known and approached indeed, but only through the medium of those laws ; such a God is not difficult for anyone to conceive, not difficult for anyone to endure. If, I say, as you would revolutionise society, so you would revolutionise heaven, if you have changed the divine sovereignty into a sort of constitutional monarchy, in which the Throne has honour and ceremonial enough, but cannot issue the most ordinary command except through legal forms and precedents, and with the counter-signature of a minister, then belief in God is no more than acknowledgment of existing, sensible powers and phenomena, which none but an idiot can deny. If the Supreme Being is powerful or skilful,

just so far as the telescope shows power, and the microscope shows skill, if His moral law is to be ascertained simply by the physical processes of the animal frame, or His will gathered from the immediate issues of human affairs, if His Essence is just as high and deep and broad and long as the universe and no more ; if this be the fact . . . then is He but coincident with the laws of the universe" (Newman, *Idea of a University*, Discourse II.).

In this, Newman was anticipated by Plutarch, who writes in his curious tract, *De facie in orbe lunae*, as follows (p. 927) : " If there were none of the world's components departing from the order of nature, but everything lay in its natural place, needing no translation nor re-arrangement, and never having needed anything of the sort from the beginning, I do not see what work there would be left for Providence, or of what effect the Supreme Artificer and most excellent Contriver has been maker and father. For there would be no use of tacticians in a camp, where each of the soldiers of himself knew his own rank and post on every occasion, so as to take it and keep it when necessary. There would be no need of gardeners or builders, in a country where the water of itself went naturally just where it was wanted with its irrigating streams, or where bricks and timber and stones of their own impulse and inclination would assume the requisite order and position. Such a theory is the absolute removal of Providence, for to God belongs the arrangement of things that are, and their division."

If God is the mere executive of natural laws : if Nature must ever take her course, and never can be interfered with, then prayer is useless, and miracles impossible. Pushed further back, this theory means that the universe has not come to be of the free will and generous bounty of God (*C.G.* ii. 23), but is a necessary emanation from Him. Ultimately, upon this doctrine, there is no God other than the universe. Thereupon you may take the whole notion of God, for what it has been called upon this theory, "an otiose hypothesis." Casting aside so idle an encumbrance, your pantheism glides into materialism or idealism, according to the turn that you give it. Against all these bad consequences the doctrine of miracles is a bulwark and defence.

An opposite error would be the Nominalist error, that there is no such thing as 'the nature of things,' but that all is done by the sheer arbitrary will of God : which notion again would obviate miracle, for miracle supposes an ordinary course and way of nature which for the nonce is departed from.¹ Both these errors are excluded by St. Thomas, *C.G.* iii. 97, 100, 101 : cf. *C.G.* ii. 26. Whence, be it observed, we gather this definition : "Things that are done occasionally by

¹ Whence 'the nature of things' arises, see *C.G.* i. 54. It is all founded upon the divine nature, one in itself, but lending itself to multiplicity as being imitable in manifold ways. These possibilities, all correlated together, make up the ideal order. Hence the laws of nature. The actual cannot contradict the ideal.

divine power, outside of the usual established order of events, are called miracles" (C.G. iii. 101).

It is a matter of words, whether we prefix the word *sensibly* to the word *outside* in this definition. If we do not, transubstantiation is a miracle, and so it is often called. If we put in the adverb *sensibly*, transubstantiation is no miracle, for there is nothing in it to affect the senses: the change is not *sensibly outside*¹ the natural order. Miracles worked as *signs*, e.g. the miracles proved in a process of canonisation, must be *sensibly outside* the usual course of nature: they must strike the senses. It is a matter of words, insertion or omission: but our language must be consistent and clear. For the purposes of this Study I retain the word *sensibly*, and call 'miraculous' those divine interferences with the course of nature, and those alone, in which the variation from the ordinary course is *sensibly evident*.

We err greatly if we suppose that God is then only active in nature when He interferes with nature by working some miracle. All the works of nature are God's works (C.G. iii. 67, 70). They are done by His power, they are expressions of His will, their very possibility and *modus agendi* is founded upon His nature and essence. You cannot get God out of the world, even if you will have Him do no miracle in it:

¹ Hence a Catholic priest, whatever else he may be called, cannot be called a *magician*, for he makes no pretence of producing *sensible effects*.

for take Him away, and the world vanishes with Him. The whole domain of physical science is girt about by theology. Not only the supernatural and praeternatural order, but Nature herself is instinct with divinity. Laboratories are not profane places, however occasionally they may be served by profane persons, as indeed altars too sometimes are. Religion is not so coy and delicate a creature that she has to be forbidden to walk abroad in the streets, and can breathe only in the incense-laden atmosphere of Lourdes and Loreto.

Still true religion will ever make much of miracles. They were the credentials of the Divine Founder of Christianity (Matt. xi. 5 : John x. 38 : Rom. i. 4). As Newman above cited shows, miracle is the crowning evidence of the supremacy of God above nature. Miracles show that God is not conditioned by nature. In a word, miracles evince a personal God.

God alone works miracles (C.G. iii. 102), *qui facit mirabilia magna solus* (Ps. cxxxv.). Yet, in an analogous sense of the word, regarding that portion of creation which is inferior to man, and that only, it may be said that man too works miracles. And we may establish a general formula, that the action of a power of higher order, supervening in the field of activity proper to a being of lower order, is miraculous relatively to the action of that lower being. Man has been called "nature's rebel," because he is continually altering the course of nature. It would be more proper to call him "nature's lord" (Gen. i. 26). The products of human art and industry, from a boot-lace

to an Atlantic liner, from a log-cabin to a city, from a scrawl of primitive 'scrip' to Shakespeare's *Othello*, these thousand things, turned out by the inventive brain and the deft hands of man, are wholly beyond the productive power of infra-human nature. In reference to that lower nature, these human products may be termed 'miraculous.' London is a standing miracle, compared with the work of those nature powers that scooped out the valley of the Thames, covered its banks once with tropical verdure and filled its forests with birds and beasts outlandish to modern England. There is no law of geology or of zoology forbidding man to appear on the scene and transform the face of the earth. What he does as man, forces geological and zoological can never do. A new force has come in, human force, and the resultant is something different from what would have come of those nature forces acting alone. It is not a question of laws, but of power. Is there any power anywhere available, higher than the power of solar heat, of rushing water, of animal sense and instinct? If so there be, let it come in, and mingle as a superior among inferiors: the outcome will be the common action of them all: no agent, not even the least, shall be set aside, but higher shall overrule lower; and because of the coming in of the higher, the result in reference to that lower order of powers shall be called 'a miracle.' If elephants and horses had mind enough to say it, they would call man a worker of miracles: perhaps in some dumb inexplicit way that is what they are think-

ing to themselves as they move about in human company.

Grades of being then furnish an argument in favour of miracles. There is one way, however, and, so far as I see, one only way, of setting this argument aside. Assume that things have travelled by slow degrees in continuous ascent unbroken, from a hot nebula to man, and from the rotation of that nebula to a Court of Justice and a Requiem Mass ;—that this ascent was necessitated by the original condition of the nebula, having in itself the promise and potency of man and all his history ;—that every stage of this ascent is a physical and even metaphysical necessity, aught else being impossible and, to a right-seeing mind, even inconceivable ;—that vegetable life is the physical outcome of inorganic matter, animal life of the vegetable, and man of other, commonly called ‘lower,’ animals ;—that man and all the deeds and works of man are products of primeval nature, as inevitable as the tide-wave and the orbit of the moon : assume all this, and the argument for miracles vanishes, with many other things precious and fair besides. Man then is not a being of essentially higher standing than the rest of nature : mankind is not a new kind on earth : man is simply a process and prolongation, an upheaval of the nature about him.¹

¹ I once heard a lecturer, who came from a distance to deliver an annual lecture at Oxford, gravely lay all this down, and then go on to describe man as “Nature’s rebel,” because he turns round upon Nature and alters the stream of her tendencies. Strange phenomenon ! or strange philosophy ?

Of Miracles and their relation to the laws of nature I have written in *The Lord my Light*, pp. 181 sq., *Miracles, their place in the Christian System*. When Newman first turned his pen to write on Miracles, in 1825-26, he hit at once upon the idea which I have endeavoured to express. A miracle, he says, is "an event in a given system which cannot be referred to any law in that system ; it is then a relative term : the same event which is anomalous in one (system) may be quite regular in connection with another." Miracle then "does not necessarily imply a violation of nature,—merely the interposition of an external cause,—Deity" (*Essay on Miracles*, p. 4). The same point has been caught by an author, not partial I suppose to the cause of Miracles, Mr. Bradley (*Appearance and Reality*, pp. 339, 340): "Every law which is true is true always and forever ; but, upon the other hand, every law is emphatically an abstraction. And hence obviously all laws are true only in the abstract. Modify the conditions, add some elements to make the connection more concrete, and the law is transcended. It is not interfered with, and it holds, but it does not hold of this case. It remains perfectly true, but it is inapplicable when the conditions which it presupposes are absent."

Man of course is not the highest of creatures. Above man, and nearer in nature to God than he is, are angels, good and bad. The interference of an angel in human concerns would be a miracle, from a human point of view. There is, however, very little

interference, sensible to us, of angels in our world. Good angels interfere only as ministers of God, God working through them. As for bad angels, I know nothing of demonology.

Man can only direct nature, and give a new turn to natural forces, skilfully availing himself of the laws under which those forces work. Such are human miracles, in relation to the world under man. Hence Bacon calls man "the minister and interpreter of nature," and says that nature is commanded only by obeying her, or falling in with her laws. But God is the Author, not the minister of nature : nature obeys Him. Man can modify the course of nature only through his voluntary muscles, which are guided by his intelligence and free will. God alters the course of nature simply by willing things to go otherwise than they would have done, had they been left to nature alone, or to nature guided by Man. God's Power is co-extensive with His Will. Hence God's action in the world, when He chooses to act miraculously, immeasurably transcends anything that man can do. Nor can we pretend to discern the *modus operandi* of a God-worked miracle. How, for instance, does God raise the dead? Still, we may presume, He does not work to the reversal of the laws of nature. When he raised Lazarus, He wrought such change in the already decaying body of the dead man that it became once again fit matter for the soul to inform : as the schoolmen say, once more it came to be *in potentia ad vitam*.

Miracles are not monstrosities. The risen Lazarus was no animated corpse.

I give, in dialogue form, a summary of what I have been saying :—

Sosias. In the hierarchy of being, the operations of each higher order are miracles as compared with the operations of orders inferior. The life of a plant is a miracle as compared with gravitation or capillary attraction, because none of the inorganic forces of nature of themselves avail to produce vegetation. The jabbering of a baboon is a miracle, as compared with the ascent of the sap in trees in early spring-time, or the ripening of autumn fruit : no processes of the vegetable world of themselves can result in sensation and the conscious expression of feeling. A book is a miracle to an ape : all the apes that have ever been since the first *pithecus*, wherever he came from, laying all their pates together and jabbering for all they were worth, could never write a book.

Eumenes. Not exactly the account of miracles that the theology books give.

Sosias. I am not speaking of miracle theologically, but transcendently ; I will come to the theological account of the matter presently. I may say at once that what would be a miracle to a monkey, e.g. writing or declaiming, is not a miracle to man, but part of the ordinary course of nature, and therefore is not called by him a miracle, nor therefore by theologians. Now the question comes : is there any power as high above man as man is above the monkey tribe? If

there be, the action characteristic of that power, entering into the domain of human experience, opens the possibility of a true and proper miracle in regard of man.

Eumenes. I see, the question of miraculous inter-ventions resolves itself, at least in its primary stage, to this : is man the supreme being, the highest power in the universe? If he is, there are no miracles.

Sosias. Precisely. If, on the other hand, there are superhuman powers, minds of higher intuition, stronger will and vaster purpose than man, then it does not follow immediately that there must be miracles, for these powers may not be wont to operate within any sphere of human cognisance, but at least here is a source whence miracles might conceivably proceed, and no man need be surprised at a miracle occasionally happening.

Eumenes. But the laws of nature—

Sosias. Aye, the laws of nature. The laws of nature, as we formulate them, are the laws of physical nature, that is, of nature inferior to man, as man, inasmuch as he is an intelligent and moral agent. Man certainly does not violate the laws of physical nature, and yet within the domain in which those laws are paramount he is continually working what I have called in a transcendental sense ‘miracles.’ I refer of course to the changes which the thought and will of man, working through his voluntary muscles, have effected upon the face of the earth within the ever-widening pale of civilisation. I point to cities and

their appurtenances in the country. Very different would have been the face of the land had the unadministered laws of physical nature alone been operative there. Man, *naturae minister et interpres*, as Bacon calls him, cannot alter or infringe the laws of nature, but his intelligent will has the power to divert their workings into new channels to serve ends of his own.

Eumenes. True, but of human intervention with the course of physical nature we have every-day examples: it is part of the order of the world: whereas visible divine intervention is quite unusual; and being unusual, a theological miracle is an uncanny thing. When we hear of 'miracle' we at once gird ourselves up against illusion.

Sosias. Even the Sacred Congregation of Rites does that in judging of the miracles alleged for a canonisation.¹ We are not dieted on miracles. There is abundant divine intervention in human life: it is called 'grace:' but grace, not being manifest to the outer senses, is not technically termed miraculous. The world began in a great miracle,—creation. Israel marched out of Egypt in a cloud of miracles. The miracle of the Virgin Birth ushered in the Redemption: the miracle of the Resurrection completed it. The miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost started the Church on her way. The miracles of the Second Coming will mark the close of that way. These are the great stages of the journey of humanity, all

¹ See an article, *Ecclesiastical Miracles*, in *The Month*, March, 1915.

miraculous. But in the intervening stages miracles are scarce as water in the Sahara, and not so necessary to travellers. When they are found, they generally grow in clusters, attaching to a particular place, as Lourdes, or to a particular person, as St. Joseph of Cupertino. We ordinary Christians go our way without them, earning step by step the reward promised to them that have not seen signs and wonders and yet believe that which signs and wonders are given to teach,—the providence and power of God and the truth of His word spoken in Christ. The general history of the Church, and the daily life of the Christian, is supernatural, not miraculous.

STUDY X.

OF THE FINAL GAINING OR LOSING OF GOD, AND
OF ALL GOD'S CREATURES ALONG WITH HIM.

Sosias. Creatures fail you, God remains. The longest day gradually diminishes into the shortest, human vigour into feebleness and decay; and there is no mounting up again into what you once were in this world. There is no reincarnation of the soul that has once lived in the body, as Hindoos suppose.

Eumenes. The impossibility of transmigration of souls is pithily put, I see, by St. Thomas: "It is not possible for a dog's soul to enter a wolf's body, or a man's soul any other body than the body of a man. But the same proportion that holds between a man's soul and a man's body, holds between the soul of *this* man and the body of *this* man. It is impossible therefore for the soul of *this* man to enter any other body than the body of *this* man" (*C.G.* ii. 73). And again: "As it is specifically proper to the human soul to be united to a certain species of body, so any individual soul differs from any other individual soul, in number only, inasmuch as it is referable to another body. Thus, then, human souls are individualised according to

bodies" (C.G. ii. 75). He further argues against transmigration (C.G. ii. 83-84).

Sosias. The palmary argument against transmigration is the fact of the soul being the *form of the body*, as Aristotle taught and our biology confirms. Plato, who likened the soul in the body to a boatman in a boat, who readily jumps from one boat into another (C.G. ii. 57), readily accepted the transmigration doctrine (*Republic*, x. 618-620; *Timaeus*, 42 B, C.; *Phaedrus*, 246), as did also the Platonising Origen. St. Thomas holds that the relation of *this* soul to *this* body, which it once animated, holds even after death, differentiating one disembodied spirit from another (C.G. ii. 80, 81), and finds in this an argument for the resurrection (C.G. iv. 79). Not without a touch of humour is his remark on *De anima*, i. 3, 26: "as though it were possible, as the Pythagorean fables have it, for any soul to array itself in any body: whereas it seems proper that every body should have its own species and form. It is as though they had said that the carpenter's art had got into the bagpipes; for as art uses its instruments, so the soul has to use the body." The discussion is rife in India. You have, I know, at home, a copy of *Of God and his Creatures*: you will find elucidations there in the notes to the passages here quoted from St. Thomas.

Eumenes. There remain the suppositions of the soul of man perishing entirely at death, or, as the Arabians held, being re-absorbed into the Universal Intellect.

Sosias. Against which the second book of the *Contra Gentiles* is mainly directed. Such views are common enough in the intellectual world around us. An Oxford friend once spoke to me of "my individual consciousness at death falling back like a wavelet upon the great sea of Universal Consciousness." But I have said more of this than I intended. My concern now is with *C.G.* iii. 25-63 : iv. 89, 90, 93 : the former passage describing man's everlasting happiness, the latter, briefly, his everlasting misery, either the one or the other after death. In Book III St. Thomas exposes, follows up, and brings to a supernatural conclusion, the Aristotelian theory of happiness, consisting in contemplation, as set forth in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X. With the Catholic Church, he fixes the term of man's happiness and perfection in the contemplation of God face to face, called by theologians the "beatific vision."

Eumenes. Are creatures to be entirely left out and ignored in that vision?

Sosias. No, every being loves its like. Creatures must ever love and look to see their fellow-creatures. Even on the very pinnacle of heaven, man remains a ζῶον πολιτικόν, as Aristotle calls him, a living thing that craves to live in company. St. Thomas was too good an Aristotelian to forget this. So he argues (*C.G.* iii. 59), "How they who see the Divine Substance see all things." All creation will be *friendly* to the Blessed, Glorified Sons of God the Creator. All creation will comfort and console them,

show them its best side, and give up to them all its secrets. The wonders of the vast stellar universe, in all its extent and complexity, will be laid open to their view. For this consolation of God's elect, we may reverently conjecture, the stars were created. They are the glittering furniture of their Father's house. St. Thomas argues this on the ground that in the state of ultimate perfection all our just desires will be fulfilled,—*justa desideria compleantur*, as we pray in a certain Collect,—and man has “a natural desire,” as St. Thomas quaintly puts it, “to know the genera and species and capabilities of all things, and the whole order of the universe, as shown by the zeal of mankind in trying to find out these things.”

Eumenes. Even in the thirteenth century, when they had no telescopes! But I have a difficulty. The Elect will be full of God, taken up with God. Does not that imply that they will be careless and oblivious of all creation besides in their entrancing vision of the Supreme Being? Ascetics are always talking to us of the neglect of all creatures to find the Creator.

Sosias. Because we mortals are in danger of losing Him in going after them. But when we have found the Creator permanently, that danger will be past. In Him we shall see all things, and the beauty of things created will ever be to our minds a reflection of His beauty. St. Thomas was alive to this difficulty, and meets it: “In this is the difference between sense and intellect, that sense is spoilt or impaired by brilliant

or intense sensible objects, so that afterwards it is not able to appreciate similar objects of lower degree ; but intellect is not spoilt or checked by its object, but simply perfected ; and consequently, after understanding an object in which there is more to understand, it is not less but better able to understand other objects which afford less scope for understanding. When then an understanding is raised by divine light to see the substance of God, much more is it perfected to understand all other objects in nature" (*C.G.* iii. 59).

The final loss of God and misery thence ensuing is the ideal contrary of the happiness that consists in the final possession of God. Not that the felt misery in the former case must necessarily rise to the level of the felt happiness in the other. To what height of agony the feeling of loss may rise, depends upon the free ordinance of God, which is not made known to us. But objectively, apart from subjective feeling, the conditions of final loss exactly balance those of final attainment. Gain of God and of all creatures with Him, loss of God and of all creatures with Him. All creatures friendly and at your service in the former case ; all creatures unfriendly and out to torment you in the latter. This point is brought out in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius (Second Exercise, Point 5), where the sinner, meditating his sin, is moved to "a cry of wonder, with a flood of emotion, ranging in thought through all creatures, how they have suffered me to live and preserved me in life,—how the Angels, being the sword of divine justice, have borne with me

and guarded and prayed for me,—how the saints have been interceding and praying for me,—and the heavens, sun, moon, stars, and elements, fruits, birds, fishes, and animals, . . . and the earth how it has not opened to swallow me up, creating new hells for my eternal torment therein.”

Similarly John Bunyan (*Grace Abounding*, n. 187) : “I sat me down upon a settle in the street, and fell into a very deep pause about the most fearful state my sin had brought me to ; and, after long musing, I lifted up my head, but methought I saw as if the sun that shineth in the heavens did begrudge to give me light, and as if the very stones in the street and tiles upon the houses did bend themselves against me : methought they all did combine together to banish me out of the world. I was abhorred of them, and unfit to dwell among them, or be partaker of their benefits, because I had sinned against the Saviour.” This notion of all nature rising up against the sinner is found even in the Greek poets, e.g. Euripides, *Mad Hercules*.

Eumenes. I am waiting to hear you say something about that most impressive thing to ordinary minds in Church teaching about the lost, I mean of course everlasting fire.

Sosias. You have my penny pamphlet, published by Catholic Truth Society, entitled, *Everlasting Punishment*. There you will find some curious speculation on the fire of hell, which I need not here repeat. I have argued there that the stress of

loss and thwarted desire,—of craving for expansion beyond self, met by compression upon self,—may work in the spiritual substance of the soul a spiritual effect, closely analogous to heat in bodies. But it is the belief of the Church that the suffering of the lost is not purely spiritual, from spiritual causes only, but that in some way matter makes their torment, and in that sense their pain is material and corporeal as coming from matter. Well, if all matter in its way shows its ugliest side to God's enemies, the belief in material affliction overtaking the lost is amply justified. We may well call it *fire*, while we refrain with St. Augustine from any attempt at exact definition. "As to which fire," he writes (*De civitate Dei*, xx. 16), "of what sort it is, I opine no man knows, unless haply some one to whom the Spirit of God has shown it."

At the same time we may divine a reason why this word *fire* should be especially used by Christ and His Church, as being the word best fitted to convey to our minds a practical idea of the material punishment in question,—to our English minds particularly. Fire is our best friend on earth. The central fire of the sun is the prime preserver of our earthly life. Put the sun out, and you put man out, and reduce this planet to a lifeless ball of ice. And what a comfort to us is the fire of the domestic hearth!

Eumenes. Yes, a good meal, a good chair, good company, a good book, all gathered round a good fire,—that is my idea of earthly comfort.

Sosias. But in the tropics you would have to put out the fire : in the same regions the solar heat is horribly oppressive : as I write, the burning lava of Etna is devastating Sicily ; and I need not tell how fearful is the pain of burning, and how terrible the death. We want fire, as we want all temporal goods, *in moderation* : carried to extremity, it is the most cruel of agonies, the direst of terrors. And so of water, so of all the things we use on earth : within limits, they comfort and sustain ; beyond limits, they are unbearable. And that is just what I am arguing : all the material creation is capable of becoming unbearable to man, and, at God's bidding, uniting to torment his enemy. This would make what theologians call "the pain of sense," consequent upon "the pain of loss" of God. The two together make hell, the exact contrary to heaven. All eschatology is gathered up in the formula, *God or no God*, meaning 'Man with God for His Father, or Man an outcast from God,' and that for ever. And the outcast from God is outcast from all creation. Contact with fellow-creatures, whether spiritual or corporeal, can give him nothing but pain.

Eumenes. Certainly your conclusion invests with a deep meaning your title, *Of God and His Creatures*.

Sosias. But I would not end with so melancholy a conclusion. God does not want us to end in that way. Read St. Thomas (*C.G.* iii. 63), "How in that Final Happiness (of the Vision of God) every Desire of Man is fulfilled."

And now to sum up the situation as a whole.

1. The mainspring of human activity is the desire of happiness. By *happiness* I mean, not pleasure or enjoyment, but well-being and betterment,—if I may say so, better-better-betterment without end. The more powerful the mind, the stronger this desire. Of this desire, enterprise is born. Enterprise takes various forms. In some minds it is practical, builds cities, widens empires, makes money, or war, spends lavishly, improves or devastates according as it is or is not conjoined with wisdom. In other minds it is speculative, idealistic, and of it is born the philosopher, the poet, or haply the saint. Anyhow it is the root of civilisation and progress from age to age. So far as the land of England, or any other country, has been removed from the state of nature, it has been so removed by this desire of happiness, born and reborn in countless generations of men. Men leave their improvements to their posterity: but, were it not for this desire of happiness, there would be no improvements at all, and the race would be sunk in savagery.

The happiness-craving is apt to march too fast, and therefore has been linked by kind nature with a lame after-born sister, called Content. To be content is a very different thing from being happy. "Content," says Alexander Bain, "is not the natural frame of any mind, but is the result of compromise." No man gets all he wants,—though the first Napoleon for some years bade fair to do even that. The average

mortal gets what he can, and schools himself to put up with it, while inwardly asking for more ; and so declares himself 'content.' *Contentus parvo*, not *beatus parvo*. Content is a compromise. Human life is built upon arches of compromise. By continuous compromise we bridge over our mutual difficulties, and contrive to live in society. But over those arches of compromise the fast train of Betterment still runs.

2. Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, xi. 7) says that the First Cause, being a Final Cause, draws all things and sets all in motion towards Itself "as the loved one draws the lover." This saying St. Thomas follows up (*C.G.* iii. 18, 19, 25). The desire for happiness is ultimately resolved into the desire for God. But it is not presently and formally so resolved in the hearts of mortal men. There is something of God in all creatures, and men take that for God, and make that the aim of their strivings. So to the objection : "the existence of God is naturally known, since the desire of man tends naturally to God as to his last end," St. Thomas replies : "Man knows God naturally as he desires Him naturally : now man desires Him naturally as he naturally desires happiness, which is a certain likeness to the Divine Goodness : thus it is not necessary that God, considered in Himself, should be naturally known to man, but a certain likeness of God" (*C.G.* i. 10, 11). These created likenesses of God, which are the good things of earth, man pursues, hoping to find happiness in them, which hope is ever

frustrate until it is closed in the limit that is called Death.

3. As a river, that has spread out in wide lagoons, may continue its course through a narrow, rocky gorge, down which its united waters rush impetuously, so in the disembodied spirit, there being no more creatures of earth to distract it, the full flow of spiritual energy is gathered together in the one passionate elementary desire of happiness. "Such love as spirits feel," to use Wordsworth's phrase, is represented in that desire. Where shall it find an outlet, an object outside itself? for to be happy in the contemplation and love of self is the prerogative of God alone. God alone is self-sufficient. All created minds, angels and men, imperatively crave an outlet for their love and desire. In them, self is only perfected by going outside of self.

4. A departed spirit, which has thoroughly abused creatures, cleaving to them supremely and for them forsaking God, will not be allowed in the next life any longer to enjoy creatures. God will fling about it that "net of bondage" γάγγαμον δουλείας (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 361), which we may tentatively describe as some sort of corporeal environment, fettering the energies, and preventing their free play, so that any exercise of them must be painful, as it is painful for us to eat with a sore mouth, or walk with a disabled foot. There is no joy in the play of a sore limb nor of a sore mind. I think I may fairly assume that a soul that has made idols of creatures, taking them instead of God, and setting its final end in them, cannot be allowed

to go on doing so in the world to come. Cut off from creatures, where is the wicked disembodied spirit to find happiness? Remember, this immortal (*C.G.* ii. 79), still individual and self-subsisting spirit (*C.G.* ii. 81) can no more acquiesce in the privation of happiness than your lungs can acquiesce in the privation of air, or your stomach in the privation of food. For a spirit to be cut off from happiness means either annihilation or misery.

Eumenes. Why not annihilation?

Sosias. Annihilation would be contrary to the analogy of the physical world, where, as physicists are agreed, nothing is ever annihilated. If you think such argument from analogy inconclusive, I have no other argument to give you as a philosopher. I can only fall back upon the Christian revelation, which declares that God will not annihilate the devil and his angels and wicked men, but reserves them for eternal torments. By reason of such loop-hole as the hypothesis of annihilation affords, besides other loop-holes found in the liberty of divine action, the *fact* (not the *congruence*) of eternal punishment cannot be called a fact of philosophy. I proceed.

5. At last this unhappy spirit has brought home to it a truth that to none of us can come home fully in this life, "that the end of every Subsistent Intelligence is to understand God," and "that the Final Happiness of Man consists in the Contemplation of God" (*C.G.* iii. 25, 37). With equal clearness is it brought home to it that it dare not meet God, cannot look Him in

the face : the rebel, defeated and taken prisoner, cannot encounter the glance of the Sovereign, still less live with him on terms of familiarity. But what is the familiarity of man with his God in the final state of the just? St. Thomas shall tell us : "Then shall we see God face to face, in that we shall have an immediate vision of Him, as of a man whom we see face to face. By this vision we are singularly assimilated to God, and are partakers in His happiness : for this is His happiness, that He essentially understands His own substance. Hence it is said : *When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is* (1 John iii. 2). And the Lord said : *I prepare for you as my Father hath prepared for me a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom* (Luke xxii. 29). This cannot be understood of bodily meat and drink, but of that food which is taken at the table of Wisdom : *Eat ye my bread and drink the wine that I have mingled for you* (Prov. ix. 5). They therefore eat and drink at the table of God, who enjoy the same happiness wherewith God is happy, seeing Him in the way in which He sees Himself" (C.G. iii. 51, p. 224). Nothing of all this is for the sinner. For him *the outer darkness* (Matt. xxii. 13), for him the eternal hunger.

6. And that eternal hunger is equivalent to everlasting fire. So we may argue, speaking of the "net of bondage" which screens the soul off from all satisfaction in creatures : and the argument is far

stronger when applied to this loss of God, inasmuch as in God, and not in creatures, every soul comes at last to recognise the final end of its desire (*C.G.* iii. 63). *Too late have I known Thee*, cries St. Augustine in his Confessions ; yet not too late, for he had time still to grow into a great Saint. *Too late have I known Thee*, cries every damned soul ; and it is too late, for *time shall be no more* (Apoc. x. 6). Every lost soul being the soul of an impenitent sinner, such a soul does not love God, or it would not be lost. Yet is the soul fully aware that in God alone lies its happiness, a happiness which it shall never taste : thus it rages after God, in despair of ever attaining to Him : it rages in despair against God, and at the same time is intimately convinced that in Him whom it loves not, and cannot hope to reach, lies the sole satisfaction of its immense, devouring hunger. Thus it is drawn to God and repelled from Him : drawn by its own nature (and possibly by some remnants of supernatural habit), and again repelled alike by its personal unfitness and by God's stern anger. And so that soul *burns*,—burns not so much because it is deprived of creatures as because it is deprived of God. Sight and love of God, were that bestowed on such a soul, would ease all the pain of privation of creatures, would make the “net of bondage” bearable enough, in fact *would extinguish hell-fire*.

Eumenes. I gather that hell is so bad precisely because God is so good, and hell is the loss of that

goodness ;—that the fire of hell is no arbitrary infliction, but a thing called for, and, one might almost say, kindled naturally by the misconduct of the creature, who, needing God, has rendered himself incapable of the satisfaction of that need ;—that the essential evil of hell is the loss of God, a loss which follows con-naturally upon sin and final impenitence ;—that the two pains of hell, called “pain of sense” (fire) and “pain of loss” (of God), go hand in hand, and by some mysterious connexion, which we can but augur dimly, the one involves the other.

Sosias. In conclusion,—while it is unsafe theology to derogate from the severity of hell-fire, which the Church, nay Christ Himself, has ever pictured as exceedingly terrible, it is on the other hand the reverse of truth that the more men you condemn to hell-fire, the safer theologian you are and the more orthodox. *Everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels* (Matt. xxv. 41) is incurred by diabolical men,—contumacious rebels, who having sinned outrageously against the light, proudly reject God’s terms of pardon. Such men, we may hope, though we can never know, are comparatively few.

Because thou art powerful, thou hast mercy on all ; and thou shuttest thine eyes on the sins of men to lead them to repentance. For thou lovest all thy creatures, and hatest nothing of the things that thou hast made : but thou pardonest all, because all is thine, O Lord, who lovest souls.

*As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not the death of the sinner, but that the sinner be converted from his way and live.*¹

¹ Misereris omnium, quia omnia potes; et dissimulas peccata hominum propter poenitentiam. Diligis enim omnia quae sunt, et nihil odisti eorum quae fecisti: parcis autem omnibus, quia tua sunt, Domine, qui amas animas (Wisd. xi. 24-27).

Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus, nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua et vivat (Ezech. xxxiii. 16).

